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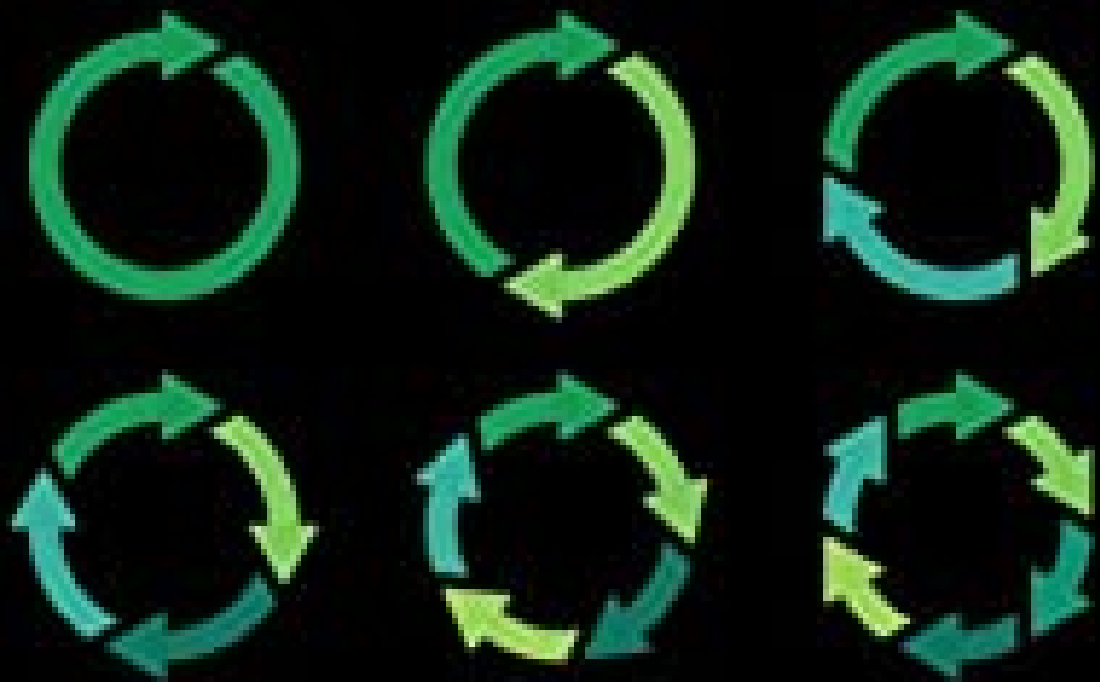
Fathali M. Moghaddam

POLITICAL PLASTICITY

The Future of Democracy and Dictatorship



POLITICAL PLASTICITY

Political plasticity refers to limitations on how fast, how much, and in what ways political behavior does (or does not) change. In a number of important areas of behavior, such as leader–follower relations, ethnicity, religion, and the rich–poor divide, there has been long-term continuity of human behavior. These continuities are little impacted by factors assumed to bring about change such as electronic technologies, major wars, globalization, and revolutions. In addition to such areas of low political plasticity, areas of high political plasticity are considered. For example, women in education is discussed to illustrate how rapid societal change can be achieved. This book explains the psychological and social mechanisms that limit political plasticity and shape the possibility of changes in both democratic and dictatorial countries. Students, teachers, and anyone interested in political behavior and social psychology will benefit from this volume.

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This book is part of the Cambridge University Press book series Progressive Psychology, edited by Fathali M. Moghaddam. As the science of human behavior, psychology is uniquely positioned and equipped to try to help us make more progress toward peaceful, fair, and constructive human relationships. However, the enormous resources of psychology have not been adequately or effectively harnessed for this task. The goal of this book series is to engage psychological science in the service of achieving more democratic societies, toward providing equal opportunities for all. The volumes in the series contribute in new and unique ways to highlight how psychological science can contribute to making justice a more central theme in health care, education, the legal system, and business, combatting the psychological consequences of poverty, ending discrimination and prejudice, better understanding the failure of revolutions and limits on political plasticity, and moving societies to more openness. Of course, these topics have been discussed before in scattered and ad hoc ways by psychologists, but now they are addressed as part of a systematic and cohesive series on Progressive Psychology.

POLITICAL PLASTICITY

The Future of Democracy and Dictatorship

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Preface

This book is about continuity in political behavior, which makes it an anomaly because almost all of our focus in the twenty-first century is on change – such as change in political behavior associated with the Internet and social media, gender roles, aging, globalization, and deglobalization.[1] Whereas received wisdom points to the importance of rapid changes in short time periods, I am highlighting 'surprising' continuity over long time periods. For example, I ask 'Why do leaders still exist?' and point to the continuing role of centralized leadership, most often older males, in different societies over many thousands of years.

I lead the reader to a reassessment of how we traditionally think about change in political behavior. This reassessment requires a differentiation between surface and deep changes. For example, the 'great' American and French revolutions of the eighteenth century, and the more recent revolutions in Russia, Cuba, Iran, and the Arab Spring countries, have brought about some changes but only at the surface level. I argue that at the deeper level, even the 'great' revolutions brought little change in key aspects of political behavior; their hallmark has been continuity. But in other areas, I point to high political plasticity and the wider ramifications of rapid changes in key domains such as women in education. By identifying continuity and change in political plasticity over long time periods, we reach a far more accurate picture of human societies and individuals, one that also better prepares us to plan for the future.

This book is written for readers interested in politics and political behavior. In the university context, teachers and students in political science, social psychology, and political psychology will find this book of particular interest.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to a number of people for helping me to develop ideas explored in this book. My history master, Mr. Henry Chambers, at Eltham College, London, was the first to make me aware of the theme of historical continuity. More recently, I am indebted to the late Rom Harré for the lively and joyful discussions we had on the many ways in which certain patterns of human life persist over time. I am also deeply indebted to David Repetto of Cambridge University Press for his enthusiastic support of this book and for helping to launch the entire Progressive Psychology book series.

CHAPTER 1

Political Plasticity, the Key to Understanding the Future of Democracy and Dictatorship

The newly built house I was visiting was designed by a Florentine architect and filled with the most elegant and fashionable futuristic Italian furniture. Exquisitely manicured and coiffured, the host and hostess were also dressed in the height of fashion, according to the latest tastes in Rome and Milan. We were served cool Italian ices and lemon cake from Amalfi, in dazzling glass dishes crafted in Torcello. It was 1977 and I was visiting a young Italian-educated Iranian couple in Tehran, during a summer away from my student life in England. The Iranian economy was booming, thanks to the 1973 oil price hikes that instantly brought Iran and other oil-producing nations enormous additional wealth. Many Iranians were using their suddenly increased incomes to transform themselves and to emulate Western societies in their homes, self-presentations, and lifestyles. The explosive pace of change and burgeoning opulence were breathtaking.

I was flying back to England the following day to resume my studies. My next immediate duty was to visit my great-grandfather to say goodbye to him and some other members of my extended family who, according to tradition, gathered at his home once a week. His home was in the old part of Tehran, close to the Grand Bazaar. A taxi took me to a street near my destination, and from there I walked through narrow, winding, dusty lanes too narrow for automobiles but sheltered from the blazing sun by high crumbling walls and soaring wind-towers. The old house was built around two sheltered courtyards, the larger one exclusive to family members. I stepped through an ancient wooden door and removed my shoes before entering the main reception room, which was spacious and covered in ancient Persian carpets. There was no Western furniture in the room, and very little sign of Western influence. Like other family members who were visiting, I sat on the floor and was served local watermelon. This seemed like a different world from the Westernized part of Tehran, including the futuristic 'Italian' home I had visited in the morning. Some

parts of Iran seemed to have changed dramatically, so they now bore little resemblance to traditional Iranian society.

However, as is often the case, surface changes hide much deeper continuities. The furniture, clothing, and some other features of life had changed for many Iranians, but central aspects of social relations between people continued as before. For example, in both the chic Italian-style house and in my great-grandfather's traditional-style home, the use of space and some other aspects of behavior remained the same. In both cases, the reception rooms had a top (*ballaa*), away from the entrance and toward the center, and a bottom (*paa-een*), at or close to the entrance. The higher the status of individuals, the closer they sit to the top. Irrespective of whether one sits on the floor in a traditional home or on chairs in a home with Western furniture, all rise when a high-status person enters the room. When seated, the soles of the feet are never shown, particularly to higher-status others. In both contexts, social relations and the use of space are determined in the same way by relative status and social ranking.

Leader–follower relations represent an even more significant example of how surface changes can camouflage deeper behavioral continuities. Before the 1979 revolution, Iran was led by a shah (Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, 1919–1980) and his family, who dressed in the finest Western clothes, spoke multiple Western languages, engaged in skiing and other Western leisure activities, and were in many respects 'modern.' After the 1979 revolution, Iran was led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989), who together with his family dressed in traditional Eastern clothing, with women in his family conforming to strict Islamic hejab. While the shah encouraged Iranians to emulate Western values and lifestyles, Ayatollah Khomeini encouraged Iranians to return to (so-called) Islamic ways, particularly in areas such as dress, gender roles and social relations. On the surface, it appears that the two leaders could not have been more different. The shah wanted to make Iran the Switzerland of the Middle East; Khomeini wanted Iran to return to an imagined ideal Islamic society of the past.

But at a deeper level, the shah and ayatollah represent an important continuity in leadership style before and after the 1979 Iranian Revolution: absolute power in the hands of a single male dictator. First, whatever the shah/ ayatollah uttered immediately gained the status of sacred, as not just 'truth' but as something never to be questioned by any Iranian. Second, there was no limit to the range of subjects on which the shah/ayatollah could or would express their sacred opinions.[1] Third, anyone who dared to question the authority of the shah/ ayatollah was immediately attacked, resulting in their banishment, or imprisonment, or death. This absolute obedience to a single male dictator

has continued into the twenty-first century in Iran – even though a charade of 'democratic elections' is now put on every few years so that the people can elect the president (that the supreme leader has chosen for them).

On further reflection, it becomes evident that continuity in political behavior is not exclusive to Iran. Consider the coming to power in the twenty-first century of Donald Trump and other authoritarian strongmen through populist support in countries as varied as the United States, Brazil, India, the Philippines, Hungary, South Africa, Poland, Turkey, Venezuela, among others. Trump's antidemocratic orientation is made clear by his refusal to accept the results of the 2020 presidential elections and his direct attempts (notably on January 6, 2021) at disrupting the peaceful transition of power.[2] The rise of Trump and other similar antidemocracy leaders in the twenty-first century, in the United States and elsewhere, represents an important continuity in leader–follower relations going back thousands of years, involving leadership by a charismatic, authoritarian older male, who (at least for a time) enjoys popular support and attempts (often successfully) to concentrate all the levers of power in his own hands.[3]

Continuity and Change in Political Behavior and the Central Role of Political Plasticity

In our discussions and explanations of political behavior in societies labeled as democracies and dictatorships, we often miss the significance of deep and influential continuities. This neglect takes place irrespective of whether democracy and dictatorship are being discussed in academic research, in the media, or in everyday life among laypersons. As I argue in this book, continuities in behavior engulf us, but they often remain camouflaged. Also, we tend to ignore the connections between different trends that are part of larger continuities. What seem to be different unrelated events can be part of a larger, deeper pattern of behavioral continuity. Consider the following three apparently unrelated events. Each of them is extremely important and each has had a profound impact on our twenty-first-century world.

First, a century after women won the vote in the United States (in 1920), no woman has become US president. Even though women now outperform men in most areas of education in the United States and many other societies,[4] they are still unrepresented at the highest levels of business and politics, where the real power lies. In places where it matters the most – the boardrooms of the wealthiest businesses, the Congress, the White House – women are still grossly underrepresented. Why is this?

Second, consider the continued widespread racism and injustices suffered by African Americans in the United States. Although slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865, African Americans continue to face harsh economic inequalities and unjust treatment.[5] What explains the continued plight of African Americans in the United States? Why did Reconstruction after the American Civil War (1861–1865), and all the other programs that followed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including the radical movements of the 1960s, not solve the injustices faced by African Americans?

The third puzzle we must consider concerns major political revolutions. Why is it that even the greatest revolutions bring so little lasting change, particularly in styles of political leadership? King Louis XVI is guillotined (1793) and the French Revolution leads to dictator Emperor Napoleon; Tzar Nicholas II is murdered (1918) and the dictatorship of Lenin, Stalin, and the new Tzars begins, until we get to Tzar Putin (in power since 2000). The Cuban Revolution, the Arab Spring, they all lead to the rise of new dictators and new forms of dictatorship. I returned to Iran immediately after the revolution in 1979, only to live through the dictator shah being replaced by the dictator ayatollah.

Of course, Americans will object that their revolution is different: The British king was replaced by an elected president. But how new was the political system that came into effect after the American Revolution? Actually, in some important respects it was not new at all. Over 2,500 years ago in Athenian democracy, free men had the right to vote – but women and slaves did not. Well over 2,200 years later, the American Revolution gave free men, not women and not slaves, the right to vote. Women and ethnic minorities had to wait until the twentieth century to gain this right, and in the twenty-first century voter suppression in various forms ensures that even in the most important elections barely half of all US citizens get to cast votes. Participants in American politics are white, old, rich, and this trend is continued through voter suppression targeting minorities and poor people.[6] Why do even major revolutions bring so little change, particularly in political power and leadership?

I argue that these three puzzles – the lack of clout among women in business and politics, the continued unjust treatment of African Americans, and the failure of revolutions to bring deep change in leadership and power relations – are all explained by *political plasticity*. I use this term to refer to limitations on how fast, how much, and in what ways political behavior does (or does not) change. Brain plasticity is already widely known;[7] political plasticity, a new concept I introduce,[8] is just as important because so much political and social progress depend on it.

What is the significance of limitations on political plasticity? Why does political plasticity matter? The answers to these questions are given in this book. This topic is important and timely, because increased political plasticity is the path to fuller democracy and justice for poor whites, for women, for blacks and other ethnic minorities, and for all of us in the larger society. This book explains the psychological and social mechanisms that limit political plasticity; a limitation that shapes the possibility of change toward more open, democratic societies.

All major societies began as dictatorships, with leaders enjoying titles such as chief, emperor, and king. But different forms of more open societies began to emerge in the West from about 2,500 years ago,[9] in the shape of Athenian democracy and then the Roman Republic. From the collapse of the Roman Republic around 2,000 years ago until the great American and French revolutions of the eighteenth century, there were a number of other smaller movements toward openness in society, such as in the Florentine Republic of the fifteenth century that was brought to an end through the power monopoly achieved by the Medici.[10] Progress toward democracy accelerated in the twentieth century, but the road to democracy has not been smooth and there have been many setbacks, including the failure of numerous antidictatorship revolutions, which have typically resulted in one dictatorship being replaced by another.[11] The world has experienced a decline of democracy and openness in the twenty-first century.[12] At this juncture in history, an ideal held by many (but not all[13]) people is to move societies to greater openness and fuller democracy, toward achieving actualized democracy, "full, informed, equal participation in wide aspects of political, economic, and cultural decision making independent of financial investment and resources."[14]

This book explains how the road to actualized democracy is shaped and limited by political plasticity. Part of the explanation for why political plasticity is so rigid is to be found in the persistent relationship between children and their adult caretakers. The characteristics of the family vary in some respects across cultures and across time, with same-sex families, single-parent families, and other variations increasing especially in Western societies in recent decades. However, a universal feature of human child–parent relations is that children are born completely helpless and are for many years entirely dependent on adult support for survival. The utter helplessness of human newborns means that for many years adults have more power than children and adults control the key resources. This relationship has remained stable across evolution and is the source of important behavioral continuities, particularly through the communications of

language, religion, traditions, values, and culture broadly. Of course, some youth do rebel against the traditions handed down to them, but the general trend of continuity is maintained through the superior power and resources of adults and older people, who pass on ways of doing things as part of a larger continuity.

From one perspective, the discussions in this book will seem pessimistic, because I often examine political plasticity in the context of change over very long time periods, spanning thousands of years. Most people want to see progress toward democracy take place much faster. Revolutionaries sometimes topple dictatorships in a matter of months, weeks, or even days, and they want to see the transition from dictatorship to democracy also happen in a matter of months, weeks, or days. My focus on change over longer time periods, sometimes over thousands of years, and the role of political plasticity in limiting political change does not match the enthusiasm of prodemocracy advocates demanding swift change.

Psychologists are another group who might be surprised and even bewildered by my focus on very-long-term changes. The majority of psychologists are trained to conduct one-hour studies, usually in a laboratory – that is also how I was trained. What psychologists usually mean by 'long-term' studies typically involve tracking changes in personality or some other psychological characteristic over the course of a few years, decades, or at most a human lifespan.[15] Psychologists very seldom consider behavioral changes over time periods longer than the human lifespan, but we *must* consider much longer time periods in order to better understand political plasticity.

My argument that political plasticity has to be considered in the context of long-term changes, sometimes thousands of years, seems to be contradicted by a view of our twenty-first-century world as rapidly and constantly changing. But a closer examination reveals that the 'fast change' people have in mind is in technological and scientific domains, which does not necessarily change behaviors such as leader–follower relations in the political domain, particularly for authoritarian strongmen. For example, the topic of 'digital governance' in the context of fast-changing technologies has important implications for leadership in organizations,[16] but as Donald Trump showed (particularly in the run-up to the 2016 US presidential elections) with his use of Twitter and other 'advanced' communications technologies, the tools available in the digital age can be used to bolster long-standing 'primitive' authoritarian leadership styles. Trump's antidemocratic sentiments are no secret, yet he has used the latest communications technologies to advance his authoritarian political agenda.

Technological and scientific innovations help to bring about changes in human behavior,[17] but this behavioral change is not necessarily in support of movement toward actualized democracy. Indeed, dictatorships such as China, Russia, and Iran have been quick to adopt new technologies to suppress opposition groups. As Xu points out, "Although social scientists, policy makers, and human rights advocates celebrated the dawn of the Internet era in the hopes that better communication technology would become a powerful tool to ensure and encourage freedom and democracy …, we have not observed widespread authoritarian collapse in the two decades since the advent of this era."[18] On the contrary, authoritarianism has become stronger and democracies have weakened during this 'digital' age.[19] Research in China,[20] the largest dictatorship, and Venezuela,[21] a relatively minor dictatorship, shows that authorities in dictatorships use the latest technologies to more accurately identify, monitor, and persecute political activists.

My goal in identifying the impact of political plasticity on changes in political behavior is to help sharpen the focus and improve the strategies of prodemocracy forces. The rise of the superpower dictatorship China, the failure to escape dictatorship after revolutions such as in Iran in 1979 and the Arab Spring countries in the twenty-first century, and the coming to power of authoritarian strongmen through elections in the United States, India, Brazil, Turkey, and some other countries, have taken the wind out of the sails of prodemocracy forces and encouraged the prodictatorship side. This trend has given rise to the suspicion that dictatorship is the more natural order for human societies, that people naturally want to escape from freedom and do not do well in democracies.[22] The concept of political plasticity reinvigorates prodemocracy forces, by helping to clearly identify the factors that act as roadblocks to political change and through this identification to enable better planning to bring about changes toward actualized democracy. Most importantly, the analysis of political plasticity enables us to make a more realistic assessment of what features of political behavior can be changed, to what extent, and at what speed. My conclusion, in the 'Afterword,' is that women are the most important key to progress toward expanding political plasticity and moving closer to actualized democracy.

Plan of the Book

Political plasticity helps us unravel the puzzle of continuity and change, summed up in the expression "The more things change, the more they stay the same" ("plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose"). This puzzle comes

to prominence particularly after major revolutions. I was confronted by this puzzle in Iran after the 1979 revolution, when at the surface level everything seemed to radically change and take on an Islamic façade but at a deeper level central and highly important aspects of political behavior remained the same. The dress code, everyday expressions and communications, slogans, music and entertainment, a lot of behavior between women and men, and much more, all changed to become Islamic. But we still had to be completely obedient to a single male dictator, the political power of an elite who circled around the male dictator continued and even increased, freedom of speech and basic human rights remained absent, and in many other important ways things remained as they had been before the revolution. This book examines and explains this puzzle of behavioral continuity through the concept of political plasticity.

Different aspects of hardwiring, both inside and outside of people, are examined in Chapter 2. Research on hardwiring in the brain is extensive and growing,[23] but there has been almost no psychological research on the role of *hardwiring outside of people* in shaping continuity in behavior across time. Turning to hardwiring outside people, I describe and examine the role of *cultural carriers*, means through which values, ideals, identities, and other aspects of culture are propagated across generations and groups.[24] Fairy tales, classic literature (including poetry and songs), traditional holidays and ceremonies, stereotypes, and daily expressions are among many examples of cultural carriers that tend to continue across generations, and often across revolutions. Cultural carriers are 'hardwired' in the sense that they are deeply imbedded within the fabric of everyday life and social relationships; they cannot be changed or eliminated without transforming everyday relationships – an extraordinarily difficult feat some revolutionaries have attempted, but for the most part failed, to achieve.[25]

The eleven chapters that follow the introduction section (Chapters 1 and 2) are organized in three parts. The five chapters in Part I explore different mechanisms through which political plasticity has remained limited, sustaining continuity in political behavior.

Why do major societies continue to have single (predominantly older male) leaders who enjoy extensive power and influence? This is the question taken up in Chapter 3. We now have the technological capability to far more extensively include ordinary people and more diverse groups in decision-making. Why do we not use this capability to include a more varied array of people in making key decisions? Why is it that even in countries labeled as democratic (including those in North America and Western Europe) decision-making continues to be highly concentrated in

the hands of individual leaders and a small elite group around them? For example, in the United States the president can decide to launch invasions of other countries, as George W. Bush did in 2001 and 2003, with the disastrous invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Why is it that so much power is concentrated in the hands of one man? I argue that the central role of a single national leader in major societies, a continuity across human history, is upheld by strong cultural carriers and collective patterns of behavior. 'Democratic elections' have not fundamentally changed this concentration of power in a single leader.

Chapter 4 examines the relationship between the rich and poor through a cyclical conceptualization of historical change, which highlights continuity in elite/non-elite relations. Through an examination of societal experiments with collective ownership, such as in the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and other (so-called) communist societies,[26] I explore limits to political plasticity in property ownership and in relationships between the rich and poor. Psychological research on our tendency to interpret the world as just, and to use legitimizing ideologies to justify inequalities, is central to this chapter.

Modernization theories and research led to the expectation that ethnicity (discussed in Chapter 5) and religion (discussed in Chapter 6) would gradually lose influence and become far less important in contemporary societies.[27] However, both ethnicity and religion continue to play central roles in twenty-first-century societies, acting as forms of strong resistance to change. Psychological theories of identity are used to frame discussions in these chapters, arguing that continuities in political behavior are in important ways shaped by ethnic and religious personal and group identities.

The final chapter in Part I examines the role of the built environment in shaping continuity in political behavior (Chapter 7). Revolutionaries in the French (1789), Russian (1917), and other major revolutions have recognized the key role of the built environment and the design of physical space in shaping and supporting behavioral continuities. For this reason, revolutionaries have often attempted to rename, redesign, and reshape the built environment, organizing the use of space in new ways. However, the built environment is often the product of many years, sometimes many centuries and even thousands of years of collective effort. Despite radical plans and enormous efforts by revolutionary groups, even those who gain absolute control of a society, there are severe limits to how fast and how much the built environment can be reconstructed. Consequently, the built environment often shapes behavior in the same ways across many generations and supports continuities in social relationships, even after radical revolutions.

The four chapters in Part II of this book examine the role of important change agents: revolution (Chapter 8), war (Chapter 9), technology (Chapter 10), and globalization (Chapter 11). Chapter 8 argues that the role of revolution as change agent is complex, generally misunderstood, and also exaggerated. Revolutions tend to bring about *Type 1 change*, involving only within-system transformations, associated with surface-level changes. They rarely bring about *Type 2 change*, involving between-system changes and transformations in political behavior at a deeper level. Examples of continuities in domains such as leader–follower relations, class-based inequalities, wealth concentration, and power distribution support my argument. Next, in Chapter 9 major wars are examined as significant contributors to change, with discussions of changes in political behavior brought about by the two world wars (1914–1918 and 1939–1945). In Chapter 10 technology is discussed as a potentially important agent of change in political behavior, but this potential is often not realized because of power inequalities in the ownership and control of technologies. For example, the potential of electronic technologies has yet to be realized in expanding the participation of ordinary people in political decision-making.

Chapter 11 examines deglobalization and the backlash against globalization and the global village. Globalization and the mass migration of hundreds of millions of people across regions and national boundaries have been associated with threats to identities, particularly national identities. In order to improve intergroup relations and the tolerance of dissimilar others, we must do a great deal more to nurture democratic citizens who can effectively participate in and support actualized democracy.[28] Also, we must consider possible limits to changes in political behavior. For example, we must consider limitations on how fast and how many dissimilar others can be successfully integrated into a host society.

The two chapters in Part III of the book look ahead to future changes in political behavior. Chapter 12 explores the dictator's mind, in the context of the deadly competition taking place between democracies and dictatorships in the twenty-first century. Particular individuals with the personality characteristics of dictators are always present in all societies. These potential dictators are ready to spring to power, as soon as the springboard to dictatorship becomes available. Consequently, the danger from potential dictators is ever-present, as is the danger of democracies sliding back into dictatorships. This is another limitation of political plasticity.

In 'Afterword,' 'lessons learned' are considered. I argue that women have played a key role in bringing about political change and are probably the most important element in future (collective and individual) behavioral

changes. The advancement of women over the last century, particularly in areas such as education, has been impressive and even spectacular. Whereas until fairly recently women were not even allowed to enter many elite universities, they now make up the majority of students and many of the faculty – most in some academic departments. In all major societies where women have gained the right to vote and stand for political office on equal footing with men, as the number of women in higher political offices have increased, progressive changes in political policies and political behaviors have followed.[29] In addition, as the role of women in society has changed, the characteristics of the family have also changed, and this has in important ways expanded and liberated the role of males, as well as gender relations within the family.

Of course, the key role played by women in shaping political behavior is intuitively recognized by many, including reactionary forces that resist progressive changes. Consequently, in societies led by authoritarian males, strenuous efforts are being made to keep women in their traditional roles and exclude them from political power. This is most obvious in Islamic societies, where women continue to be treated as third-class citizens and prevented from contributing to cultural, economic, political, scientific, and other domains. The consequence is that not a single Islamic society is in the ranks of the advanced countries of the world.

In summary, this book uses the lens of political plasticity to explore and highlight the role of continuities in political behavior and the social and psychological mechanisms that sustain this continuity across time. By examining the mechanisms through which continuity in political behavior is maintained, light is shed on limitations to political change. In essence, this book explains the gap between our utopian political ideals, as reflected in communist and capitalist ideologies and societies, and our actual practices, both as they exist today and how they are probably limited in future development. Through this analysis, I identify a realistic and progressive path for prodemocracy forces to follow toward achieving actualized democracy.

CHAPTER 2

Hardwiring inside and outside People

My focus in this chapter is on the role of hardwiring inside and outside individuals that serve to uphold continuity in human behavior. This discussion provides the framework for the more detailed examinations of continuity in behavior, such as in leader–follower relations, discussed in the five chapters of Part I of this book. An essential element of this framework is the fuller clarification of what 'hardwiring' means. At the same time that the use of the term *hardwiring* has steadily increased since the 1970s,[1] some critics have argued that this term is too imprecise and more effective terminology needs to be adopted by researchers.[2] After all, if hardwiring refers to a behavior that is dependent on brain wiring, then it must include all behavior, and if it refers only to behavior that is not modifiable, then it refers to very little since all behaviors can be modified under certain conditions.

My approach is to conceptualize hardwiring at one extreme end of a continuum, with softwiring at the other extreme.[3] There are very few – perhaps no – behaviors that are at the extreme ends of the 'completely hardwired' to 'completely softwired' continuum (Figure 2.1). The vast majority of behaviors are located somewhere on this continuum between the two extremes. That is, almost all behaviors can be modified in certain circumstances, but there is variation in the extent of modification possible and the characteristics of the conditions necessary to bring about change.

Grossi and a number of other researchers have made available detailed examinations of the meaning of 'hardwired,' but only in relation to the brain and processes inside individuals.[4] I argue that in addition to the attention to the 'hardwired–softwired' continuum concerning processes within individuals, we must attend to the same continuum concerning processes in the larger society *outside individuals*. I adopt a *societies to cells* approach, by giving priority to hardwiring outside individuals. But I also acknowledge that, as reflected in epigenetic research,[5] there is no strict division between hardwiring inside and outside individuals. For example,

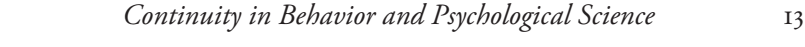

Figure 2.1 The continuum of behaviors, from completely hardwired to completely softwired, with almost all behaviors located somewhere between these two extremes

the question is not whether an individual 'possesses' or 'does not possess' certain genes but which genes are turned on or off by environmental triggers. The implication is that characteristics that are to some degree hardwired within individuals or within environments can be triggered (or not) by factors within environments and/or individuals.

Continuity in Behavior and Psychological Science

How has continuity in behavioral style been studied in psychological science? The answer is that for the most part continuity has been neglected, and when it has received research attention it has been studied by psychologists within individuals across the lifespan and within families across generations.

Studies of individuals across the lifespan have focused on continuity in a diverse set of behaviors, including anxiety disorders,[6] personality,[7] and intelligence.[8] While the theme of continuity is strong in much of this research, the central role of contextual factors means that changes take place in relation to changing circumstances. For example, while there is some continuity in mental health across the lifespan, there is evidence from Western societies that subjective well-being and mental health improve with age.[9] However, there is also evidence demonstrating that the relationship between mental health and age differs across cultures; for example, older Russians are reported to experience more negative and less positive mental health, whereas older Germans are reported to experience more positive and less negative mental health.[10]

Research on behavioral continuity within families across generations is summed up by the main title of a paper on this topic: "Parenting begets parenting."[11] In line with predictions from a range of theoretical perspectives, including behaviorism and psychoanalysis, the early experiences of children in important ways influence their cognitive, emotional, and social behavior as adult parents, thus influencing how they treat their own children. Research shows the role of mothers to be particularly important in the continuity of abuse across generations: Mothers who were abused as children tend to have children who become abused.[12] From an epigenetic perspective, the contextual characteristics created by particular types of

parenting will tend to trigger or silence particular genes in the child and in this way influence future behavior (including parenting).[13]

The social identity research tradition has also resulted in some research on the continuity of collective identities;[14] this research has highly important implications for societal processes. When people feel their group identity is under serious threat, they tend to be more supportive of aggressive, authoritarian strongmen as leaders, less supportive of human rights and democracy, and more biased against outsiders of various kinds, including immigrants and ethnic minorities.[15] This threat to ingroup identity has been heightened by globalization and the vast movement across national borders of people (usually dissimilar others) and cultural products, which are seen by some nationalists as 'invading our country,' attacking the foundations of 'who we are,' weakening our collective identity, and changing the kinds of people we have become through our shared history.

Iona Opie and Peter Opie are among the researchers who have examined continuity in the behavior patterns and the narratives of children, which are passed on from one generation of children to another, to some degree independent of adults.[16] This includes all the rhymes, stories, riddles, and so on that children learn at certain ages, then teach the next group of younger children, before forgetting much of what they knew in that world of childhood.

In identifying continuities in behavior across historical periods, we must take care not to be misled by surface-level changes so that we neglect deeper continuities that can take place in disguised form (as I discuss next).

Continuity in Disguise

> [D]espite a vehement campaign to discredit and destroy all forms of religion, the Stalin faction reinscribed certain elements of popular religiosity into official political culture. The cult of Lenin was the most obvious example. During his lifetime Lenin had been adulated but had not been the object of a cult of personality. Following his death, however, the Stalin group quite consciously sought to establish its legitimacy by sanctifying the dead leader. During the civil war the Bolsheviks had waged a campaign to expose the popular belief that saints' bodies did not decompose, yet Lenin's body was now embalmed like that of some latter-day pharaoh and placed in a mausoleum that instantly became a shrine.
>
> Stephen Smith[17]

> After the 30 August 1918 assassination attempt on Lenin by Fania Kaplan, the first but still exceptional religious associations tried to explain Lenin's survival. Since September 1918, Lenin's qualities of a saint, an apostle, a prophet, a martyr, a man with Christ-like qualities and a 'leader by the grace of God'" were venerated.
>
> Klaus-Georg Riegel[18]

Religion represents an extremely useful domain of behavior through which to better understand hardwiring outside individuals, as well as the persistence and continuity of certain behavioral patterns across long time periods. The continuity of religious behavior across major revolutions and radical societal transformations affords particularly good learning opportunities for us, because left-leaning revolutions, and particularly those inspired and guided by communist ideology, ostensibly make great efforts to eradicate religion and delegitimize the church. In a secret 1922 letter to the Politburo, Lenin urged his communist comrades to use the opportunity created by the widescale famine Soviet society was suffering at that time to attack the church: "[T]he greater the number of representatives of the reactionary clergy and reactionary bourgeoisie we succeed in executing … the better. We must teach these people a lesson right now, so they will not dare even to think of any resistance for several decades."[19]

It is certainly ironic that Lenin, who attacked religion and the church so vehemently, was transformed by Stalin and others into a religious icon, with his mausoleum becoming a religious shrine. But not much effort was needed to achieve this transfer of Lenin into a religious icon, because continuity in religious behavior was strongly supported by hardwiring outside individuals. There is also some evidence that religious behavior is influenced by hardwiring within individuals,[20] but it is probably the hardwiring outside individuals that is most important in this case.

Cultural carriers of various kinds supported the continuity of behavior patterns before and after the 1917 revolution in Russia. That is, the tendencies in cognitive style that reflect hardwiring within individuals and that served to continue patterns of religious thinking were very strongly supported by the wider, societal patterns of culture. An example of such larger patterns of culture is the shared and mutually upheld cognitive style among Russian peasants, which influenced the cult of Lenin. As Nina Tumarkin argues,

> The success of the Lenin cult as a stabilizing and legitimizing force in Soviet political life is due in some measure to the extent to which its contours were shaped by traditional peasant culture. But the power of the cult owes even

> more to its religious form and content … Lenin's body, displayed as a holy relic, has been … the most evocative symbol of Lenin's immortality … From the moment of Lenin's death, the assertions of his immortality became the central emotional focus of his cult.[21]

Thus, Lenin, an antireligion symbol during his life, was turned into a legitimization of religious experiences after his death.

Hardwiring outside Individuals

In explaining continuity in human behavior over historic time periods, I first look to the role of what I call *hardwiring outside individuals*. By this I mean the hardwiring reflected in the total way of life of human beings, including the built environment, societal organization, and formal institutions, as well as the informal culture, narratives and all forms of communications, leader–follower relations, and cultural carriers. This external hardwiring is already present when individuals are born, and it continues (sometimes with little fundamental change) after they die. Each generation of humans tends to see themselves as innovative and novel in their behaviors, but in many important respects we are following the same behavioral patterns that have been in place over very long time periods.

Commonality and continuity in hardwiring outside of individuals can best be explained through an evolutionary lens. Certain behaviors, which I have termed *primitive social relations*,[22] improve the survival chances of groups. Effective leadership is an example of these primitive social relations. Effective leadership was a powerful factor in helping some groups to better survive, and there developed within those groups behavioral and organizational practices, including formal laws and informal shared beliefs and values, that supported and kept in place effective leadership. This is reflected in the constitutions of twenty-first-century societies, which uniformly endorse the important role of the national leader (such as the president and the prime minister).

The central role of leadership is common to all major societies, irrespective of how democratic or dictatorial they actually are or position themselves as being. In both more and less democratic countries, the most important decisions in many political, economic, and other domains are ultimately made by leaders. Of course, in more democratic countries the slogan 'the people decide' is routinely brandished, but in practice even in such countries the central and pivotal role of the national leader in making decisions is undeniable. For example, despite the role of 'the people' in making national decisions in the United States, it was ultimately President George E. Bush

who made the (disastrous!) decisions to launch the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). The right of leaders to make such decisions is supported by national constitutions and legal systems. Of course, competing groups (e.g., the US Congress) attempt to exert their influence as well, but in practice power remains concentrated in the hands of the national leader through formal and informal hardwiring outside individuals.

Formal Hardwiring outside Individuals

Constitutions and legal systems are examples of what I refer to as formal hardwiring outside individuals (among the many other examples are organizational charts and regulations of institutions and the formal rules and regulations of labor unions and professional associations). In many cases, national constitutions are very slow to change. Indeed, the thrust of originalist interpretations of constitutions is that continuity rather than change should be the priority.[23] ("Originalism is the theory of constitutional interpretation that identifies the Constitution's original meaning as its authoritative meaning."[24]) Originalism is highly influential in both Western and non-Western countries and is reflected in the resurgence of Islam and the movement to return to Sharia Law in many Muslim societies. The constitutions of many Islamic countries have been revised since the late twentieth century in an attempt to return to 'original' Islam. I was in Iran in the post-1979 revolution period when this process was underway and the new (so-called)) revolutionary Iranian Constitution was crafted by originalists, with an emphasis on 'return to authentic Islam.'

But there are also progressive interpretations of constitutions, which push for changes in legal interpretation in line with changing conditions, an example being Erwin Chemerinsky's progressive interpretation of the US Constitution.[25] Revolutions also often result in revised or completely rewritten constitutions,[26] and this is a central theme of revolutions, from the 'great' eighteenth-century American and French revolutions to those in the twenty-first century. After regime change, revolutionaries use their newly acquired power to create a constitution that they believe will move society toward the ideals they have in mind; for example, the 1918 Soviet Constitution set out a new vision of collective and private property relations in Soviet society.[27]

We must not be misled into believing that the ideals set up in the new revolutionary constitution actually match what goes on in society. For example, the idealist vision of property relations set up in the 1918 Soviet Constitution never came to fruition, in the sense that collective farms and collective ownership in general were not implemented in a way that resulted in high

efficiency and productivity or happy peasants (this matters a great deal, because "Russia's population … was still four-fifth rural and predominantly peasant at the time of the Bolsheviks' October 1917 revolution"[28]). Indeed, most Russian peasants regarded collectivization as a second Serfdom. This is a key difference between the actual events on the ground and Soviet propaganda, as Sheila Fitzpatrick argues in *Stalin's Peasants*:

> Stalin had a picture of the Soviet kolkhoz as a large-scale, modern, mechanical farm that was economically and socially light years ahead of the backward, small-scale farming of the Russian peasant. This was the image propagated by Soviet publicists and accepted by many outside observers. Reading the Soviet press of the 1930s, it is hard to catch any glimpses of the real Russian village behind the Potemkin façade. This is not only because of the shameless exaggeration and deception that became a standard feature of Soviet writing about agriculture during collectivization, but also because a whole new language was invented to describe peasant farming in its collective guise.[29]

Second, we must not assume that the (so-called) revolutionary constitution is new in foundational ways, even though it uses revolutionary language. At a deeper level, the revolutionary language of revolutionary constitutions can camouflage stubborn continuities. For example, on the surface the new postrevolution constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran seems very different from the pre-1979 monarchist constitution. However, the 'revolutionary' constitution is 'even more of the same' in the sense that it endorses an absolute dictatorship, giving power to a single male leader (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3 of this book). The 'revolutionary' dictator has a new title (supreme leader, instead of shah) and a new ideological justification for his right to holding absolute power (Khomeini's interpretation of Shia Islam,[30] instead of the shah's interpretation of the pre-1979 Iranian constitution), but the result is the same: absolute power in the hands of a male dictator.

Informal Hardwiring outside Individuals

Informal hardwiring outside individuals refers to all that is integral to culture and serves to regulate behavior but is not made explicit through formal laws and regulations. This includes all of the normative system, comprised of norms, rules, values, attitudes, stereotypes, and in general expectations people hold about correct and incorrect behavior in different contexts. The normative system is mostly informal, implicit, and tacit, but it is nevertheless highly powerful in shaping behavior.

Informal hardwiring outside individuals is already 'out there' when an individual is born and serves to regulate the integration of the individual into society, as well as the entering of societal culture into the individual.[31] Becoming a person and being able to effectively function as a member of a society require that the individual take on how to think and how to act correctly according to the local normative system. Although there is variation in human behavior, most individuals most of the time behave correctly according to the local normative system. This regularity enables us to interact with others successfully based on the mostly 'correct' patterns of behavior we and others follow.

It would be a mistake to assume that because it is informal the normative system is weak in influence. For example, the norms, rules, and so on that guide the behavior of people at a wedding are not written down as formal laws, but they nevertheless serve as extremely strong regulators of behavior. In many Western and non-Western societies, the bride will wear white rather than black, for instance. Women and not men wear dresses at weddings. These behaviors are not regulated by formal laws but by informal norms that are followed by most people most of the time. There are at least two characteristics that endorse the power of the normative system: It is shared and it is passed on through cultural carriers.

As society enters into individuals through socialization processes, individuals take on ways of thinking and acting that reflect patterns of expected behavior. But this taking on is not a private process involving isolated individuals; rather, it is a group process involving collectively shared and mutually upheld ways of doing and thinking. The collective nature of the informal normative system makes it more powerful than it would be if it did involve private processes within isolated individuals; those people who go against what is expected behavior face collective pressure to do the right thing. But there is variation in behavior, in part because there are some differences across groups in conceptions of 'correct' behavior.

Cultural carriers serve as a second factor that ensures the great impact of the normative system. These carriers are powerful in large part because their influence carries across time and across different generations. For example, the national flag and the national anthem carry certain values (e.g., love and sacrifice for the nation) across many generations. In some cases, cultural carriers carry forward values and other features of the normative system across thousands of years, an example being the Christian cross as a cultural carrier. In many cases, cultural carriers regulate patterns of behavior across groups as well as individuals; for example, the Islamic hejab serves to regulate behavior between men and women, in particular restricting the behavior patterns and rights of women.[32]

Hardwiring inside Individuals

Almost all of the research on hardwiring has focused on the brain and processes within individuals, with some attention to policy implications.[33] Certain domains of behavior, such as sex differences and sexism,[34] have been postulated as being more hardwired. But a focus on plasticity and continuous rewiring is also reflected in twenty-first-century brain research,[35] for example, as expressed by Sebastian Rinke and colleagues: "The brain is not as hard-wired as traditionally thought … Even in the mature brain, new connections between neurons (ie., synapses) are continuously created and existing ones are deleted, which can be described as structural plasticity."[36]

A highly important factor that remains largely overlooked is the human body, whose shape, size, and other characteristics have remained fairly stable over long time periods. As Rolf Pfeifer and Josh Bongard and others have argued,[37] the human body in important ways shapes how we think and act, as well as the world we make 'out there.' It is not just that the body is necessary for thinking to take place but that the characteristics of the human body shape the kind of intelligence we have developed. These characteristics include, according to Rolf Pfeifer and Josh Bongard,

> the shape of the body, the kinds of limbs and where they are attached, the kinds of sensors (eyes, ears, nose, skin for touch and temperature, mouth for taste) and where on the body they are found … When interacting with the real world, the body is stimulated in very particular ways, and this stimulation provides, in a sense, the raw material for the brain to work with.[38]

This embodied perspective moves away from Cartesian dualism and the tradition strengthened by René Descartes (1596–1650) of conceptualizing the mind and the body as independent and separate entities. Moreover, because the normal human body has had the same characteristics (e.g., two legs, two arms, two eyes, two ears, one nose, one mouth, one head, etc. located in specific parts of the body) over very long time periods, the impact of the body on human thinking has been similar across time and across cultures.

Thus, the body has served as an important kind of hardwiring with respect to cognition. This continuous role becomes clearer and more specific when we consider domains of behavior such as audition. The range of sound waves audible to adult humans is from about 15–20 hertz (i.e., cycles or vibrations per second) to about 15,000 hertz. Our auditory capacities are far more limited than many animals. For example, bats use *echolocation* to produce sounds and use the echoes of those sounds to locate and hunt small insects.[39] Just as the limitations of our auditory system shape

our experiences, the characteristics of our visual system (e.g., the common distribution of rods and cones) have evolved over very long time periods and continue to shape our perception of shapes, motion, and colors as took place thousands of years ago.[40] In this way, the physiology of our visual system serves as hardwiring, maintaining continuity in our hearing and seeing.

There is strong evidence that evolutionary pressures have shaped hardwiring within the body in areas such as beauty preferences. Evidence shows some such preferences to be inborn, as they appear early in infancy,[41] and are common to most or perhaps all humans.[42] There is also evidence of sex differences in brain activity localization in how women and men value youth and other physical characteristics, and this also points to hardwiring.[43] The main criteria used for judging attractiveness in others, such as age (youth is more attractive[44]) and symmetry (more symmetrical is more attractive[45]), are also seen as more hardwired, although some researchers highlight the role of plasticity and social learning in these domains as well.[46]

Evidence of hardwired characteristics inside individuals has been interpreted through costly signaling theory,[47] which postulates that certain characteristics of people (and animals generally) serve to communicate important information about reproductive fitness to relevant others, and the costlier the signal the more reliable it is. More costly signals are more reliable because they are harder to fake. A classic example of this is the peacock's tail, which is a highly costly way of signaling reproductive fitness to peahens because the longer and heavier the tail, the lower the agility and mobility of the peacock (making it more vulnerable to attack by predators). A long peacock tail signals to the peahen, "Choose me. I carry this huge handicap but still succeed in the competition for survival!"

In the human sphere, there is ample evidence that people are concerned with manipulating signals to improve the image of their reproductive fitness. For example, people are motivated to be seen as making charitable contributions, irrespective of whether the contributions lead to benefits for others.[48] Perhaps the largest domain of activity where the manipulation of signals takes place is cosmetics and plastic surgery. Although people are very good at judging the ages of other individuals,[49] there is also evidence that makeup can reduce the perceived age of others, and the older they are the more positive the effect of makeup.[50]

Thus, on the one hand hardwiring within individuals supports continuity in behavior across historical periods, particularly in areas such as beauty preferences: Youth and symmetry are preferred across time and across cultures. On the other hand, throughout the ages, humans have used makeup

and various kinds of cosmetic surgery (including tattoos, which have become highly fashionable in the twenty-first century) to try to influence how others see them. This is also a widely influential continuity in behavior.

Concluding Comment

Hardwiring inside individuals has received extensive attention, because it fits the reductionism of mainstream research, heavily influenced as it is by the individualism and self-help ideology of American culture.[51] Of course, hardwiring within individuals does support continuity in human behavior, but the role of hardwiring outside individuals is arguably even more important. This importance arises in part from the potential we have to alter environmental conditions and in this way influence hardwiring outside individuals and create new opportunities for social and political changes. But we must approach this task with humility, because revolutionaries of different types have in various ways attempted to reach this goal. For example, the communists who came into power in Russia after the 1917 revolution attempted to use behaviorist psychology as a way to reengineer the environment in order to create the new Soviet citizen (this is discussed in Chapter 8 of this book). The failure of Soviet collectivization programs and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 suggest a failure to achieve this goal and the power of continuity in behavioral styles.

PART I

Political Plasticity and Behavioral Continuity

CHAPTER 3

Why Do Leaders Still Exist? Leadership and Followership

'Leadership in the twenty-first century,' 'the new leadership' – contemporary discussions of leadership reflect a strong theme of what is new and changing.[1] These discussions look to the future and typically highlight some novel aspect of leadership from a different angle.[2] Influenced by this research literature, we readily assume that leadership has been undergoing changes and is in a state of flux. Leadership seems to be about what is new in a fast-changing world.

But I take a very different approach in this chapter, by interpreting leadership as a pivotal and highly influential example of *continuity* in behavior and what remains the same rather than what changes. I look to the evolutionary roots of leadership and how in foundational ways leader–follower relations have remained stable over very long time periods. I argue that in some important respects leadership has changed very little throughout human history. Also, because leadership is so influential, continuity in this behavior has supported continuity in some other key types of human behavior, such as in the area of inequality.

I begin by discussing the evolutionary origins of leadership and inequality, which are linked. Next, I examine the role of leaders in contemporary societies, a role that continues to be central and key. This is despite there being available avenues for moving toward more collective decision-making and relying less on individual leaders being the ultimate 'deciders.' I accept that institutional and constitutional constraints on leadership are greater in democracies,[3] but I also argue that in all twenty-first-century societies there continues to be very heavy reliance on individual national leaders. Consequently, my arguments about leadership in this chapter apply to all societies, both those that are closer to absolute dictatorship and those that are closer to actualized democracy.

Factors Associated with the Evolution of Leadership

What are the evolutionary origins of decision-making being concentrated in an individual leader? How did leadership first emerge, eventually evolving into the kinds of powerful national leaders (presidents, prime ministers, etc.) that lead twenty-first-century societies, with the United States arguably having an imperial presidency?[4] I begin by discussing the evolution of a *surplus*, an amount of food and other resources that was beyond what was necessary for survival.

The Evolution of a Surplus

There is general agreement that the relatively stable climatic conditions of the Holocene (roughly the last 11,700 years[5]) were instrumental in enabling the development of a surplus through increasingly productive farming and animal domestication. In turn, while the evolution of leadership in human societies was influenced by a number of different factors,[6] the emergence of a surplus was probably among the most essential. The availability of a surplus could support a part of the labor force to be engaged in activities other than food production, and this was a foundation for the development of larger, more complex societies involving higher levels of divisions of labor and specialization. For example, supported by a surplus, some people could dedicate themselves to fighting against competitor groups, to defend the surplus from attacks, and to try to expand the territories controlled by the ingroup.

Both the presence of a surplus and the increased complexity of society enabled by a surplus were contexts in which the role of leadership could emerge as more central and important. First, a surplus attracts outgroup attackers, and intergroup conflict is a condition in which effective leadership becomes even more valuable.[7] Leaders help to organize defensive forces to protect the interests of the ingroup. Second, a surplus can lead to greater conflict within the ingroup, as ingroup factions compete for a greater share of surplus resources, and a key role of leadership has been identified as resolving internal conflicts; Mark Van Zugt argues, "it would benefit group members, especially the weaker ones, to endorse a leader to act as peacekeeper in the group."[8] Third, a surplus allows for the growth of larger societies, with greater divisions of labor and more complicated projects that require coordination and monitoring. An essential role of leadership is to achieve such coordination and monitoring, enabling the successful implementation of more complex projects.

A surplus could also be used by leaders to direct resources to group members in ways that strengthen the leadership position, as well as to monopolize resources for themselves. In this way, it serves to increase inequalities in society, moving away from the more egalitarian hunter-gathering existence humans experienced earlier in small groups, typically numbering in the hundreds. According to Von Rueden, anthropologists have described hunter-gathering societies as egalitarian "because of their relative lack of resource inequality, absence of leaders with coercive political authority, and intolerance of hoarding, arrogance, or aggrandizing behavior."[9] (Despite being more egalitarian, hunter-gatherers also have leadership, as Zachary Garfield and Edward Hagen point out: "[E]ven the most egalitarian mobile hunter-gatherers have some forms of leadership."[10]) But although the distinction between societies with and without a surplus is seen as highly important, some researchers have argued that property rights played an even more important role in the evolution of human societies and the expansion of the role of leadership.

Private Property

Explanations that center on a surplus through farming and animal husbandry as the foundation for more complex societies and centralized leadership have been challenged by researchers who argue that the coevolution of private property must be considered as equally important. In an influential study, Samuel Bowles and Jung-Kyoo Choi point out that, at least initially, in many places farmers were not more productive than the foragers they gradually replaced.[11] If productivity was not necessarily higher, those drawn to farming must have had other incentives to change their lifestyle.

A factor that has emerged as important in the transition from a hunter-gathering to an agricultural life is property rights, both in being able to claim ownership to property and things and in being able to pass on wealth as inheritance to others, usually one's offspring.[12] The emergence of property rights was less likely when the 'property' in question was perishable and not easily stored, such as what was collected by hunter-gatherers, including fruits, roots, and fresh meat. However, when the 'property' in question is cereal grains that can be placed in longer-term storage or a natural resource that is more predictable (such as a river or lake location with a steady supply of fish), then the defense of such property is more manageable.[13] Thus, the defensibility of resources is seen as a key factor in the development of property rights.

Inequality

Alongside the development of systems for storing a surplus in cereal grains, there evolved, first, more centralized and formalized leadership and, second, larger societies with greater inequalities. The presence of grain stores in a community will inevitably attract attention from competitor outgroups, who would like to attack and take over the surplus grain. The defense of grain stores becomes a central task that can be aided through leadership, as Siobhan Mattison and colleagues have pointed out: "Coordination of large groups or complex tasks such as warfare present arenas in which leadership has been hypothesized to be valuable."[14]

The role of leader as coordinator and commander of defense forces developed at the same time as greater power concentration in the hands of the leader, as well as larger inequalities in society. Irrespective of whether leadership arose more through dominance or prestige, the leader inevitably enjoyed greater power, as did some other individuals who had more influence in how the surplus was used. In some societies, a surplus meant that some individuals could pay for the labor of others using surplus resources. Such 'hiring' could be short term or long term and contributes to inequality, which was first evident about 10,000–12,000 years ago.[15]

Divisions of Labor

The emergence of a surplus meant that some people could spend their time on activities other than food gathering/production. For example, the leader could focus on managing projects and directing the strengthening of defenses. Some individuals could specialize in the making of stone, wooden, and leather articles, which could be used in trade to acquire products made by other groups. Another form of specialization involved spiritual or religious behavior. Research on basic cognitive processes involved in belief,[16] as well as on the origins of religion among hunter-gatherers,[17] suggests that some forms of religious behavior evolved as part of human societies certainly by the early part of the Holocene. Along with this, some individuals specialized in roles, as shaman, for example, supporting religious behavior. As these specialized roles developed, although it is not inevitable that a surplus result in greater cultural complexity, it is probably the case that as divisions of labor increased and more specialized activities developed, there was a greater likelihood for cultural complexity to also increase.

Much of the discussion about the origins of specialization have focused on sex differences and the question of why in many societies there are major differences in the tasks assigned to women and men. Alice Eagly and her

colleagues have made a compelling case for the importance of *gender roles*,[18] collectively shared and upheld beliefs about the characteristics of women and men, in how task specialization takes place for women and men in each society. Reviewing evidence on sex roles in foraging societies, Wood and Eagly show that "the fundamental determinants of division of labor, women's reproductive activities and men's size and strength, interacted with environmental conditions to produce differing divisions of labor across foraging societies."[19] Although in most cases the divisions of labor followed traditional patterns, environmental conditions influenced some alternatives in early human societies, for example, women in some societies hunting large animals and men also taking care of children. Along the same lines, leadership in these early societies depended on environmental conditions: Women made key decisions in some domains, but in areas such as defense and intergroup conflict it was male leaders who dominated.

However, research suggests that males have tended to dominate leadership positions even in societies that have not had a tradition of collective violence. Two well-researched examples are the Tiwi of North Australia and the Tsimane of Bolivia.[20] In traditional Tiwi society, there were practices that effectively and quickly resolved conflicts. For example, the accused would have to stand in a fixed spot and tolerate being the target for spears thrown from a distance by the accuser. But the conflict would be declared at an end as soon as even a minor hit was achieved. Conflicts would not be allowed to escalate to the intergroup level. Among the Tsimane too, traditions of mutual dependency and collaboration in farming, hunting, and fishing have been very strong and associated with the absence of collective violence. In these societies lacking a history of collective violence, elected leaders still tend to be physically strong males with greater kin support.

Threats and Crisis Incidents

A substantial body of empirical and theoretical social science literature suggests that group members more strongly support centralized leadership when the ingroup is under threat and/or experiencing direct attack.[21] The research of Napoleon Chagnon on the Yanomamo in the jungles of Brazil/Venezuela,[22] as well as classic studies of intergroup conflict involving groups created by researchers,[23] demonstrates how in conflict situations aggressive leadership takes center stage. Such conditions of increased threat arose as human population levels increased and there was greater competitive contact between different groups.

Contact between groups of hunter-gatherers sometimes involves conflicts, but intergroup conflicts became far more serious and complex when the groups in interaction were larger and had specialized fighting forces. Such military forces were led into battles by leaders, who gained greater power and prestige in crisis situations. These leaders of early societies often became early versions of what in contemporary terms are known as 'dictators.' Thousands of years later, the role of dictator was formalized in the constitution of the Roman Republic, when a single leader (usually the emperor) is temporarily given extraordinary powers in order to guide Rome out of a serious crisis.[24] But the Roman Republic fell and was transformed to a long-term dictatorship, in part because once extraordinary powers were given to a leader, it proved extremely difficult to get them back.

In the next section I discuss the continuing central role of leadership in contemporary societies. This continuity is in part through the role of leader as a symbol through which members identify with the ingroup.

Leadership Continues as Highly Influential and Central to Decision-Making

Leadership is a central and essential behavioral characteristic that evolved as common to all major human societies,[25] with universal functions such as being a source of valuable knowledge and resolving conflicts in the group.[26] Irrespective of their political system and cultural characteristics, major societies share the feature of having a leader – an individual who leads, and is followed by, others and has a dominant role in making decisions for the group. We do not need to believe *The Great Man (or Woman) theory of history*,[27] the idea that history is shaped by a small number of 'great' individuals, to accept that leaders have continued to be prominent in major societies and have enjoyed influence well above the level of ordinary people.

A review of the leader–follower situation in the two most populous countries in the world, China and India (which together have a population of about 2.8 billion people, approximately 36 percent of the world's population), reveals that the individual leader continues to sway tremendous power and influence, irrespective of whether the path to power for the leader is more dictatorial or democratic. In China, Xi Jinping has declared himself leader for life and launched what Elizabeth Economy describes as The Third Revolution, the key to which is "the dramatic centralization of authority under his personal leadership."[28] As *The Economist* puts it, in contemporary China "Mr Xi is to be seen as the undisputed authority on everything."[29] In India, the populist strongman Narendra Modi swept to power through

elections in 2014 and has governed by centralizing power and galvanizing Hindu nationalism – against Muslims and others depicted as enemies. Power is concentrated in the person of Modi; as Sanjay Ruparelia notes, "Most observers simply refer to 'Modi *sarkar* [government],' underlining its personalization of power."[30] This trend of power concentration in the hands of a strongman leader is evident in many other countries in the twenty-first century (such as Vladimir Putin in Russia and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey[31]). The enormous power and status enjoyed by individual leaders continues a very long tradition, spanning at least thousands of years. But it was not inevitable that leadership would become a universal and central feature of twenty-first-century human societies.

The question *Why do leaders still exist?* hints at alternative ways in which decision-making could take place in human groups. First, there are numerous examples of collective decision-making (rather than decision-making by individual leaders), particularly among animals but also among humans. Second, human societies now have available to them the technological capability to enable many more people to participate more frequently in decision-making, but this potential remains unrealized.

Collective Decision-Making

> [C]ollective decision-making mechanisms across a wide range of animal group types, from insects to birds (and even among humans in certain circumstances) seem to share certain functional characteristics. Furthermore, at a certain level of description, collective decision-making by organisms shares essential common features with mechanisms of decision-making within the brain.
>
> Ian Couzin[32]

In many circumstances, animals have to rapidly make decisions that determine their survival and reproductive success, such as where and how fast to move next, whether to rest to take advantage of food and water available at their present location, and how to avoid a dangerous predator. Often, such decisions are made collectively,[33] even though individual members of the group do not have equal access to information. The differences in information, such as the location of water or a predator, available to different group members are often because of their spatial locations. But the presence of 'naïve' individuals in the group does not necessarily mean that a poorer decision is made by the group. On the contrary, research suggests

that the presence of uninformed individuals can limit the influence of strongly opiniated minorities and moderate group decisions to become more inclusive and democratic.[34]

Collective decision-making can be interpreted as involving collective cognition, in the sense that networks of animals can convey information in a way analogous to neural networks in the brain. In this analogy, individual animals are similar to individual neurons, as Ian Couzin argues: "Ants seem to exhibit a very 'neuron-like' behavior in which inactive ants exhibit a low propensity to become spontaneously active (analogous to spontaneous firing of a neuron)."[35] The direction of the group can be influenced by a small number of ants/neurons who have more information than others.

Experiments with human groups show that a small informed minority can influence the rest of the group to make correct decisions (they also show that a minority can mislead the group to make incorrect decisions, but that is not our focus here[36]). For example, John Dyer and colleagues conducted experiments with fourteen–sixteen-year-old participants,[37] organized in forty mixed-sex groups of eight individuals each and asked to individually stand on a letter (A–H) in an inner circle, facing a number (1–16) spaced equally around the perimeter of an outer circle. In addition, individuals were handed slips of paper with a behavioral rule to follow: Naïve participants were simply told to 'stay with the group' and informed individuals were told to 'go to number X, without leaving the group' ('X' representing a number from 1 to 16, found in the outer circle). Participants were not allowed to communicate with one another during the experiment. Nevertheless, results showed that a minority of informed individuals could influence a group to move to a target, even though most of the group members were unaware of what the target was.

Thus, in both animals and humans there are instances where collective decision-making takes places and results in positive outcomes. This opens the possibility that collective decision-making, particularly in more open societies,[38] can provide a viable alternative to decision-making by an individual leader.

Technology and Public Participation in Decision-Making

There have been very rapid advances in computer technologies and electronic communications, and these advances have accelerated in the twenty-first century. These technological developments have helped authorities in many countries continue to provide basic remote education in 2020–2021 despite the COVID-19 pandemic;[39] many more children would have been deprived of education during this pandemic period if electronic

communications had not been available. The same technologies have been used to enable public participation in urban planning,[40] so that a greater number of ordinary citizens can have a say in the design of the built environment and, for example, how the design of a new road should proceed (if at all). These developments have resulted in the growth of so-called 'smart cities,' where (despite shortcomings[41]) communications between the authorities and citizens are far more fluid and decision-making about city planning is more participatory.[42]

In the domain of political decision-making, some progress has been made, mostly at the local government level, in using electronic communications to expand the role of the public.[43] But the vitally important decisions that determine the direction of events for an entire country over many years, such as whether or not to invade another country or lower taxes for the super-rich and corporations, are often made by a single leader, influenced by a close group of like-minded advisors. Of course, one could argue that national leaders make decisions in light of public opinion (gaged through polling), so in one sense the public does participate. But this is a minimal and often nonexistent level of public participation, and there are numerous twenty-first-century examples of national leaders who ignore the wishes and interests of the general public.

In conclusion, although electronic communications provide greater opportunities for mass public participation in political decision-making, these opportunities are seldom taken up. When they are taken up, it tends to be at the local rather than national level. Important decisions that shape the direction of nations still continue to be taken by individual national leaders. Of course, defenders of the status quo could argue that national leaders make decisions through the influence of advisers and public opinion, among others. Consequently, even if it is an individual leader making the final decision in a 'the buck stops here' style, others do have influence. However, the influence that others can have does not negate the dominant and sometimes overpowering role of the individual leader in not only making decisions but also setting the tone of behavior for others, particularly in subtle areas such as ethics and morality.[44]

Having versus Not Having a Leader

Human societies might have evolved to rely far less, or perhaps even not at all, on leaders. However, this is not the evolutionary path we took, and now I want to briefly consider the implications of the path we did take, which leaves us heavily reliant on individual leaders. Irrespective of the sources of

power wielded by a leader,[45] even in the more democratic societies of North America and the European Union, twenty-first-century leaders enjoy tremendous power to influence decision-making. The question I take up is, what are the implications of having leaders versus not having leaders?

The most direct and immediate implication of having leaders is that power and prestige are centralized in the person of the leader, and also in the group of supporters and advisers who surround the leader. This concentration of power and prestige results in behaviors that set the leader apart from the rest of the group. That the leader becomes psychologically different is supported particularly by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in his theoretical analyses (Freud's examinations of leadership are among his most compelling writings), and also by recent experimental research.

Freud limited his analysis of groups to those with leaders, because he believed that only through leadership can groups achieve a high level of coordination and organized action. For example, he would argue that African Americans became an effective and mobilized group only through leadership, such as that provided by Martin Luther King (1929–1968). The leader is essential for group formation, which according to Freud takes place through identification, arising when individuals perceive that they share a common quality. The leader becomes the shared common object through which individuals identify with one another, the primary group being "a number of individuals who have put one and the same object in place of their ego ideal and have subsequently identified themselves with one another in their ego."[46]

In addition to serving to bind the group together through identification, according to Freud the leader also plays a vitally important role in displacing aggression onto targets outside the ingroup (Freud was the first psychologist to point out that dissimilar others are the prime target of displaced aggression). This displacement of aggression is necessary because there are within the ingroup libidinal (emotional) ties between group members that involve both position and negative feelings.[47] For example, the members of a basketball team are bound together by positive emotions, which results in strong cohesion and cooperation, but they also experience jealousies, rivalries, and other behaviors that could potentially fragment and harm the ingroup. Similarly, the members of an army or a church are bound together by positive affections, but they also experience some negative emotions toward one another. The role of the leader is to channel negative feelings and direct them on to dissimilar outgroup targets, so that the illusion is maintained among ingroup members that they are all part of a loved group. According to Freud, this illusion is common to all

groups, even though they are different in many ways. However different a church and an army may seem, "the same illusion holds good of there being a head – in the Catholic Church Christ, in an army its commander-in-chief – who loves all the individuals in the group with an equal love."[48]

Freud saw the relationship between the leader and followers as being rooted in our evolutionary past and the primal horde, and there being two different kinds of psychologies for the leader and followers. The leader stands apart from the group psychologically:

> The members of the group were subject to ties just as we see them today, but the father of the primal horde was free … his will needed no reinforcement from others … he loved no one but himself, or other people only in so far as they served his needs … Even today the members of a group stand in need of the illusion that they are equally and justly loved by their leader; but the leader himself need love no one else, he may be of a masterful nature, absolutely narcissistic, self-confident and independent.[49]

The idea that the leader has certain psychological characteristics that differ from that of followers need not be based on the assumption that leaders are born that way and/or that there is something different about the personalities of leaders that leads them to misuse power. Rather, their different *circumstances* can influence leaders to behave differently. Experimental evidence suggests that when they are placed (even by chance) in extraordinary situations, many ordinary people will tend to act in unusual and unexpected ways, including harming others and becoming self-centered and corrupt when they come to acquire power over others.[50] The adage that 'Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely' has proven to be true in experimental studies.[51] For example, experimental studies show that power tends to lead individuals to not see the constraints that normally inhibit people from going outside the rules,[52] and these studies include experimental demonstrations of embezzlement and bribery.[53] Unfortunately, real life provides far too many examples of leaders becoming corrupted by power, from US presidents such as Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton misusing their power to major corporations such as Volkswagen cheating on emissions tests.[54]

Thus, the evolutionary path we took involves heavy reliance on leaders as the centers of power and decision-making. In more dictatorial countries, leaders have fewer constraints on their actions; in large dictatorships such as China and Russia and smaller dictatorships such as Iran and North Korea, the supreme leaders cannot be questioned, criticized, or reprimanded. This opens the path to enormous corruption, as other individuals and groups (including the relatives and close associates of the 'dear leader')

also position themselves behind the leader and outside the realm of criticism. In more democratic countries, there are greater constraints on leadership. Indeed, the entire process of democratization can be interpreted as an attempt to constrain leadership and make the leader accountable to the people. But we see that in practice this is extremely difficult to achieve, and even in democracies leaders continue to enjoy enormous power and decision-making authority, which they can and do misuse.

Concluding Comment

It is noteworthy – and ironic – that as electronic technologies advance and make it possible to achieve decision-making that is far more participatory, in the United States there has developed a more imperial presidency and in China and India, the most populous dictatorship and democracy respectively, Xi and Modi have also transformed their leadership roles to be more centralized and powerful. The continuity of strongman leadership is part of a tradition well established in human history, associated with group-based inequalities and wealth concentration.

The rise of strongman authoritarian leadership in the twenty-first century has coincided with the increased concentration of wealth, a topic I turn to in Chapter 4. From their evolutionary roots, leadership and wealth inequalities were closely connected, and this association continues in the twenty-first century. Increased wealth concentration moves lockstep with increased authoritarian leadership, wealth concentration being associated with power and decision-making centralization.

CHAPTER 4

Rich and Poor – Still Just as Different

'Occupy Wall Street,' 'the 99% vs. the 1%,' 'the COVID pandemic and increasing inequality'…on television, in newspapers, in chat rooms, on Facebook, and all over the Internet, it seems everywhere we look, in the twenty-first century the widening difference between rich and poor people is getting a lot of attention. But this is not only in the mass media and the Internet. In 2014, the English translation of Thomas Piketty's 685-page research book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* became an unexpected bestseller.[1] Along with this volume were published a series of other academic books on inequality,[2] all of which would normally have received attention only in specialized research circles but have now become part of a much wider debate about the rich and poor (within this debate, there is some variation among researchers on the issue of rich–poor differences[3]). This wider debate created a space in which even 'popular' books took up the theme of inequality, with titles such as *The Triumph of Injustice: How the Rich Dodge Taxes and How to Make Them Pay*.[4]

The wider attention now given to inequality is no doubt in part because the gap between the rich and the poor has grown to be so enormous and wealth concentration has reached historically high levels. Oxfam International reports that the world's 2,153 billionaires now own more wealth than 4.6 billion people,[5] and the 22 richest men in the world have more wealth than all the women in Africa. The super-rich now take private 'fun rides' to outer space in their own spaceships, keep as toys seldom-used yachts that cost hundreds of millions (and sometimes billions!) of dollars each,[6] and consume extraordinary luxuries in ways that harm everybody.[7] Although there has been a decline in global poverty across thousands of years of recorded human history,[8] wealth concentration and inequality has increased sharply in recent decades.[9] As the subtitle of a book on the wealthy declares, in the twenty-first century the billionaires have "devoured the world" and acted on self-interest,[10] as experimental research suggests they would.[11] The kind of increasing inequality that

we now have in major societies tends to result in the poor feeling extreme relative deprivation, with detrimental health consequences for the bottom group in the population.[12]

Of course, the categorization of society into two groups, rich and poor, can be criticized as too simplistic and misleading, and the same criticism can be made of Marx's use of the two categories capitalist and proletariat and Pareto's use of elite and non-elite. After all, the middle class has grown considerably and could serve as a bridge between the top and bottom groups. However, in this discussion I use the terms rich and poor, rather than categorize society into three or even more groups, because the trend of increasing wealth concentration has created an enormous difference between the rich and the rest in terms of the choices they have available to them. Lukas Arndt has pointed out that the rich can be differentiated by levels of income, wealth, and the origin of wealth.[13] In this discussion, following Piketty,[14] I give highest importance to wealth as the main criteria for assessing inequality, and I differentiate between the richest and the rest. This is in line with empirical research showing that ordinary people also differentiate between strata within the rich and see the richest as different from the merely 'rich.'[15]

But inequality is nothing new. In the first section of this chapter I review evidence that shows a wealth gap and group-based inequalities in major societies over the past 10,000 years or so. Particularly in the modern era, the idea that poverty is detrimental and should be ended has developed. In the next section, I examine this idea in relation to the 'war on poverty.' In the final section, I examine the ideologies that legitimize inequalities between the rich and poor. These uphold the continuation of the gap between the rich and poor, despite sound arguments suggesting that a large wealth gap between the rich and poor is extremely harmful and should be avoided.

Rich and Poor across Historical Time

In order for inequality to come into existence and to grow in a society, so that rich and poor groups emerge and the differences between them become larger, there first has to be a surplus of resources. That is, there must be a growth in resources above what is required for a population to simply survive (as discussed in Chapter 3 of this book). The emergence of a surplus came about during approximately the same era as the domestication of animals, the growth of farming and human settlements with larger populations, and, very importantly, traditions, customs, and/or laws that enabled private property to be transmitted as inheritance across

generations. Research suggests that these conditions first came about approximately 10,000 years ago.

Ten Thousand Years of Inequality is the main title of a collection of research discussions on the archeology of inequality in ancient history.[16] By examining evidence from graves, houses, and other buildings, as well as ancient settlements of different sizes, archeologists have been able to map out differences between the rich and poor from at least 10,000 years ago. The archeological evidence shows that in ancient times whereas some individuals were buried with many precious objects, such as thousands of beads, ivory rings, and precious ceremonial spears, other individuals were unceremoniously placed naked in the earth, with nothing to mark or accompany them in their graves. Similarly, some families lived in relatively large homes with surrounding gardens and lands, while others survived in pitiful, tiny shelters.

In the five-volume work *A History of Private Lives*,[17] we are presented with a more intimate picture of the private lives of the rich and poor from about 3,000 years ago to the modern era. For example, the historical accounts of families during Roman times portray households where the majority of inhabitants were servants and slaves, all working to provide a luxurious life for a comparatively tiny group, the master and his family. By the medieval era, there were not only differences between rich and poor, masters and servants, but also between finer layers within the rich and poor in society. For example, Philippe Contamine reports on subtle differentiations between housing for different levels of medieval peasantry:

> [T]here were houses for cotters, living on the verge of poverty; other houses for day laborers who owned few tools and fewer animals; and still others for well-to-do plowmen who owned several plows and harnesses and who would have needed to store quantities of grain and straw and to house a number of domestics. Obviously the shape of the peasant house must have depended on the wealth of the peasant who occupied it.[18]

Until the industrial revolution that accelerated from the eighteenth century in Western Europe, accounts of private life portray a world in which a small elite minority, backed by military power, owned almost all arable lands, and the vast majority of people worked lands owned by their lords.[19]

These accounts provided of the private lives of the rich and poor match assessments by economists, indicating that even in the early nineteenth century the rich–poor gap was huge and about 80 percent of the world's population was poor, with about 50 percent in Europe living in extreme poverty.[20] The historical situation is succinctly summed up by Jim Yong Kim, a World Bank president: "Before 1800, just about everybody was poor. You had royalty, you had these huge landowners, but they were a tiny, tiny

minority and just about everyone lived in poverty. And everyone lived very much wedded to their land. This was the entire history of humanity."[21]

Thus, studies in archeology and social history, as well as assessments by economists, show that the private lives of the rich and poor and the resources available to them have been very different over the last (at least) few thousand years. This rich–poor gap was not exclusive to any particular part of the world or to any particular era but was pervasive across major societies and across eras. The pharaohs of Egypt, the emperors of Rome, the Tsars of Russia, the emperors of China, the kings and feudal lords of Europe – the rulers of different societies and the rich elite who surrounded and supported them have enjoyed enormous resource advantages for thousands of years. Archeologists have computed estimates of the Gini coefficient, a measure of economic inequality (with values from 0, complete equality, to 1, complete inequality), for societies thousands of years ago to show the persistence of inequality across history.[22] At the same time, although computing estimates of the Gini coefficient for earlier societies is a useful exercise, there is some uncertainty about the accuracy of such estimates. This is because it is only in the last 200 years or so there have been sufficient improvements in the statistical information necessary to arrive at accurate measures of inequality.

Studies on global inequality from the early nineteenth century show that inequality between individuals in the world has steadily increased.[23] However, within this general trend there are patterns of decreasing and increasing inequality, and these patterns provide hints at how extreme inequality can be avoided. The thesis accepted by many researchers is that in capitalist societies, there will be a general change toward greater inequality unless there is intervention. But experts disagree about the kind and level of intervention needed to ensure that capitalist societies avoid extreme inequality. In an influential analysis, Walter Scheidel has identified what he calls the Four Horsemen of Leveling: "Four different kinds of violent ruptures have flattened inequality: mass mobilization warfare, transformative revolution, state failure, and lethal pandemics."[24]

The standard argument that capitalist free-market forces inevitably result in extreme inequality, and this inequality will be controlled only through interventions such as mass mobilization warfare or government-implemented progressive taxation, seems to be supported by long-term trends in wealth distribution. Research presented by Piketty and others shows that before the start of World War I (in 1914), unregulated markets in Europe resulted in high levels of wealth concentration and

inequality – higher than in the United States.[25] The shocks of World Wars I (1914–1918) and II (1939–1945) resulted in less inequality in both Europe and the United States, as faced with catastrophic mass mobilization warfare the rich became more willing to make financial sacrifices and to share their resources. However, promarket policies since the 1980s have resulted in far greater inequality in the United States; this trend is less strong in Europe (however, we should note that this standard argument is not supported by all researchers[26]).

Despite some differences in how researchers interpret the sources and historical patterns of inequality, there is general agreement that at least over the last 10,000 years or so there has persistently been a huge gap between the rich and poor.

The War on Poverty

The argument that steps should be taken to end poverty made serious progress from the eighteenth century, including in the works of Adam Smith (1723–1790) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778). The last part of the eighteenth century, influenced particularly by the ideas surrounding the French Revolution, was the first time it was proposed that poverty could be ended by introducing universal social insurance.[27] The idea of a minimum standard living as a *right* (rights being what we are owed[28]) became more widely discussed through the influence of Thomas Paine (1737–1809).[29] This turn toward the right of people not to live in poverty was new and different from previous policies, which attempted to regulate and segregate the poor in poorhouses, as reflected, for example, through the so-called *Poor Laws* that had developed from earlier centuries in England.[30]

In 2000, a formal antipoverty position was taken up internationally through the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with the target of halving extreme poverty by 2015. There is some consensus that this initial antipoverty goal was achieved: From 1990 to 2015 the number of people living in extreme poverty around the world declined from 1.9 billion to 836 million.[31] In the same time period, the number of people living on more than $4.00 a day tripled and the number of undernourished people in poor countries halved. This progress paved the way for more ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2015.[32] Of the seventeen SDGs to be achieved by 2030, the top two are 'end poverty' and 'end hunger.'[33] Although some progress has been made in decreasing poverty, the problem of poverty is far from solved, as reported by a World Bank president:

> 26% of the world's population lives on less than $3.20 per day, which corresponds to the typical poverty line in lower-middle-income countries; 46% of the world's population lives on less than $5.50 per day, the average poverty line among upper-middle-income countries. In total, according to these measures, an estimated 3.4 billion people – nearly half of the world's population – live in poverty.[34]

The goal of ending poverty has now been coupled with the slogan *war on poverty*, and in some respects this has been taken up by researchers, governments, and institutions such as the United Nations as a global campaign. The argument is made that the rich have a duty to help the poor climb out of poverty.[35] This duty arises in part because rich countries have imposed poverty on poor ones, first through colonization and more recently through multinational corporations that have active sweatshops, mining, pulp and paper, and other activities in poor countries but return the vast bulk of their profits to rich countries.[36] But the enormous profits of multinational corporations, many of them US-based, have not proportionally helped the poor within the giant superpower.

The so-called war on poverty has not ended but transformed poverty in the United States. According to the title of an influential book, we now have a war against the poor.[37] This war against the poor is waged by depicting them as 'deserving' to be poor, by attributing their poverty to lack of hard work, resilience, intelligence, and other intraindividual weaknesses, by depicting them as cheaters and dishonest, by incarcerating larger numbers of poor people (who do not have the monetary resources to hire effective defense lawyers) for minor offenses, and by interpreting 'too much welfare that prevents initiative' as the reason most responsible for the continuing problem of poverty.[38] This individualistic, reductionist interpretation of the causes of poverty does not take into consideration the extremely unequal opportunities people have in the United States, with the poor having minimal practical opportunities to improve their conditions.[39] This situation was made much worse by the Trump administration (2016–2020), which in some assessments treated the poor with cynicism and contempt.[40]

Poverty alleviation programs have made some progress in non-Western countries, particularly in China, India, and Mexico. Research on poverty reduction programs in these three countries show that they are more successful when they have the backing of the central authorities and when central authorities take steps to ensure that local elites and local power brokers play a constructive role in support of these programs.[41] Poverty reduction in China has made particularly impressive progress and extreme poverty has been reduced to probably just a few percentage of the population, but

poverty in rural areas is persistent (about 37 percent live in rural areas in China).[42] But there are several macrolevel trends that present challenges to poverty reduction programs in lower-income countries. Most directly and immediately, global warming is accelerating and impacting the poor disproportionally, making the challenge of ending poverty far more difficult.[43] Related to this, despite the backlash against globalization, capital continues to chase the highest profits and lowest wages across the world, and, as Joseph Phiri and Kamal Abdullahi suggest, it is questionable if this is the "ideal remedy for ending poverty and enhancing development."[44]

Next, I turn to the question of how the superior position of the rich has been justified.

Legitimizing Ideologies in History

> [I]t may be laid down as a general principle, that the more extended the ancestry, the greater the amount of violence and vagabondism; for in ancient days those two amusements, combining a wholesome excitement with a promising means of repairing shattered fortunes, were at once the ennobling pursuit and the healthful recreation of the Quality of this land. Consequently, it is a source of inexpressible comfort and happiness to find, that in various periods of our history, the Chuzzlewits were actively connected with divers slaughterous conspiracies and bloody frays. It is further recorded of them, that being clad from head to heel in steel of proof, they did on many occasions lead their leather-jerkined soldiers to the death with invincible courage, and afterwards return home gracefully to their relations and friends.[45]

This is how Charles Dickens (1812–1870) introduces the Chuzzlewit family to us, in his sprawling comic novel *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843/44). Dickens assures us that like all rich and ancient families, the Chuzzlewits were intimately involved in violence and conspiracies, as a means of becoming and staying rich. Given that rich families like the Chuzzlewits have enjoyed a luxurious and advantageous life relative to the poor for at least the last 10,000 years or so, how have they justified their advantageous position? The poor have always constituted the vast majority of people, and across history there have been numerous rebellions and revolutions against the rich, the privileged minority. Despite such disruptions, the gap between the rich and poor has continued, even after major revolutions that were enthusiastically led by revolutionaries skilled at using proequality rhetoric. For example, despite historic revolutions in Russia, China, Iran, Egypt, and many other countries ostensibly intended to enhance equality, and even end inequality, the gap between the rich and poor has continued in these (and other)

countries. Of course, after major revolutions the old rich get replaced by a new rich. I was surprised and impressed by how quickly and skillfully the new rich, using an 'Islamic' front, managed to replace the old rich that surrounded the shah after the 1979 revolution in Iran. Clearly, what continues to varying degrees after revolutions is a rich–poor gap and the need for *legitimizing ideologies*, narratives that justify continuing inequalities in society.

To be effective, legitimizing ideologies have to be widely adopted in society, both among the rich and the poor. Also, both those who are born rich and those who become rich in their own lifetime typically come to believe that their superior status and access to resources are justified.[46] Indeed, those individuals who rise up the ranks and become rich in their own lifetime become even stronger supporters of the political system.[47] After all, their rise to the top (supposedly) shows that the system works and the ideology justifying inequalities in society must be correct. Of course, as Dickens points out, the rich do not have to rely exclusively on ideology to legitimize their superior position. After all, the rich control the security forces: They can and do use brute force to maintain the status quo. However, brute force is costly and not always the most effective means of justifying and continuing their advantageous position and maintaining group-based inequalities. A shortcoming of brute force is that it makes it clear that the rulers do not have the support of at least a significant portion of the population. A less costly and more effective way is for the rich to use their far superior resources to propagate, and to have widely adopted in society, an ideology that legitimizes the existing power structure and resource distributions. Evidence suggests such legitimizing ideologies have been particularly effective in the United States, where increasing inequality has been associated with a shift toward conservativism rather than liberalism and resource redistribution.[48] These legitimizing ideologies have been extensively examined by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Karl Marx (1818–1993), and Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), as well as by contemporary psychologists.[49]

Legitimizing ideologies can best be understood in relation to the concept of *false consciousness*, the lack of awareness among people of the social class they objectively belong to and the actual distinct and different interests of their own social class vis-à-vis other social classes.[50] For example, Jack would be described as suffering false consciousness, because of his lack of awareness that he meets the objective criteria for being a member of the working class and that the interests of his social class are different from, and in conflict with, the interests of the capitalist class (consisting of the people who own the means of production). According to this view, false consciousness arises because people adopt the ideologies that are dominant in society,

and these ideologies are shaped by what Marx termed the capitalist class and Pareto termed the elite to be biased and to justify the status quo.

Put simply, the rich shape the dominant narratives that explain how society works, including how fair it is and who deserves to get what. The rich use their influence to interpret their superior position in society as fair and justified and to ensure that this interpretation is widely accepted. In this way, the lower classes adopt interpretations of society that work against their own personal and class interests. A number of contemporary psychological theories have been strongly influenced by the concept of false consciousness, a prominent example being system justification theory.[51]

But what motivates people to believe the dominant narratives in society? Given that the dominant narratives justify the superior position of the rich, why should ordinary people adopt these narratives, with the result that they suffer false consciousness and act against their own interests? Of course, these dominant narratives are supported by the vast media outlets, education system, and other means available to the rich to propagate their ideas, but what is it about the psychological characteristics of people that make them *receptive* to these dominant narratives? Research suggests a powerful psychological factor, captured by Mel Lerner's hypothesis of the *Belief in a Just World*, the conviction that people deserve what they get and get what they deserve.[52] According to research findings,[53] this conviction means that in societies with greater inequality, people justify the greater wealth gap by reporting a greater merit gap between the rich and poor. Instead of perceiving a greater wealth gap as unjust, people interpret it as just by exaggerating the merits of the rich and minimizing those of the poor.

The *just world hypothesis* was launched through a pioneering study by Melvin Lerner and Carol Simmons.[54] The report of this 1966 study is invaluable, because the authors make clear how they are concerned with the relationship between the larger sociopolitical system and the beliefs of individual citizens, focusing on the puzzle of "how societies which produce cruelty and suffering maintain even minimal popular support. What must occur is that the people come to accept the misery and suffering as well as the norms and laws which produce these conditions."[55] The illustrative study reported by the authors set up a situation where a victim is (ostensibly) subjected to cruelty and suffering. The victim took part in a learning task and (ostensibly) received severe and painful electric shocks when she made mistakes. When the study participants believed that they would witness the victim suffer again in a second session and are powerless to change the victim's fate, they devalued the victim. In other words, they 'blamed the victim' for the suffering she experienced.

The 'blaming the victim' style of attributing the causes of injustice matches well with an individualistic American Dream account of inequalities in society.

According to this American Dream narrative, society is meritocratic and the success or failure of individuals is determined by their own personal characteristics, particularly how talented, resilient, and hard-working they are. Anyone can make it, but only if they have the necessary individual qualifications. If Joe and Jane are unemployed or underemployed much of the time, and unable to provide adequate food and shelter for their three children, this is because Joe and Jane do not have the personal talent, training, and determination required to succeed in the free market. Their lack of success is unrelated to them having been born into a financially poor African American family; their group memberships are not relevant to their individual success, so it is argued.

Blaming the victim serves a self-protective function, because it preserves a picture of the world as a place in which bad things happen to individuals who deserve bad outcomes, not a place where randomness and ill luck could result in bad outcomes for good people – like us! In this sense, blaming the victim is part of the larger legitimizing ideology of the American Dream. Of course, legitimizing ideologies have a far longer history than the American Dream. Their origins go back to at least the beginning of the rich–poor wealth gap about 10,000 years ago.

A useful distinction can be made between divine and secular legitimizing ideologies. Divine legitimizing ideologies began early in human evolution,[56] are pervasive across time and across societies, and assume non-human, divine source(s) as legitimizers. These divine sources are typically assumed to be God(s), who choose representatives on earth. As a consequence, the claim is that these representatives, such as a king or a pope or a supreme leader, acquire certain divine rights. Perhaps the best articulated and most direct representation of the 'divine right of kings' was given by King James I (1566–1625) of England and Scotland in 1609:

> The State of Monarche is the supremest thing upon earth: For Kings are not only Gods Lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon Gods throne, but even by God himselfe they are called Gods.[57]

But for much of the last 2,000 years, in Western societies the Pope has enjoyed an even greater role as 'the representative of God on earth' because in this role he has been placed above emperors and kings.[58] The same role of 'God's representative on earth' is claimed by the supreme leader in Iran and put into practice through the insertion of the principle of *Velayat-e-Faqih* in the Iranian Constitution.[59] As a general strategy, religious leaders of different kinds have claimed to represent God on earth and to have the divine right of making decisions and judgments on behalf of the rest of society, including in the realm of justice, inequality, and relations between the rich and poor. In some societies the monarch took a

shortcut by declaring himself/herself to be both the head of state and the religious leader, a prime example being King Henry VIII (1491–1547).

But the claim by certain individuals to represent divine forces probably began well before the advent of agriculture and the emergence of mass religions in recorded human history. In a study of religiosity in thirty-three hunter-gatherer societies,[60] 79 percent of the sample were found to include *shamanism*, which involves a shaman interacting with a supernatural world. The shaman serves as an intermediary, often through entering a trance state or some form of altered state of consciousness. In this way, the shaman can claim to connect ordinary people with the spirit world – a practice from at least tens of thousands of years ago that continues in some form in the twenty-first century.[61] The connection shamans (ostensibly) have with the spirit world gives them special status and influence in the group, including on matters of justice and resource distribution.

Concluding Comment

The rich–poor divide has been continually with us at least over the last 10,000 years, since the growth of a surplus. It is this surplus that came to be monopolized and used to maintain the rich–poor gap in different societies. The size of this gap has varied across time and across societies, and in recent decades this gap has grown far larger. The scholarship of Thomas Piketty and others has put a spotlight on how the super-rich have accumulated an increasing share of global wealth and the bottom group have fallen further behind. Remarkably, this concentration of wealth in fewer hands is consistent across countries that avowedly have very different political systems, such as China, Russia, and the United States.

Despite national and international programs to end poverty and repeated rhetoric about a war on poverty, the rich–poor gap continues and political plasticity in this domain seems rigid and consistently low. Of course, government policies make an enormous difference to the size of the rich–poor gap. For example, in the United States since the 1980s successive Republican and Democratic administrations have followed policies that have further enriched the rich and made the rich–poor gap even larger.[62] My point, then, is not that the size of the rich–poor gap is fixed but, first, that this gap has remained large over thousands of years and, second, that despite political rhetoric to the contrary, in the twenty-first century the size of this gap is increasing in association with the rise of strongman authoritarian leadership and weaknesses in democracies.

CHAPTER 5

Ethnicity Is Forever

About 800,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda in just 100 days in 1994.[1] Most of the killings were by violent extremist Hutus and most of the victims were Tutsis, the Hutu and Tutsi being the two major ethnic groups in Rwanda. Eventually, about a million children, women, and men were killed in the Hutu–Tutsi conflict that year. This horrendous violence would lead us to imagine that there are important and difficult to change differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi, but this is far from the case. Researchers have pointed out that these two ethnic groups are highly similar and integrated; as Peter Uvin explains, "they speak the same language, believe in the same God, share the same culture and live side by side throughout the country."[2]

The Hutu and the Tutsi are examples of ethnic groups that, despite being very similar on objective criteria, come to develop social constructions of themselves and the other as being in fundamentally important ways different and as being deadly enemies.[3] Between 1945 and 1999, fifty-eight highly violent ethnic civil wars took place in different parts of the world.[4] In discussing the prominence of ethnic conflict, Asoka Bandarage argues, "The frustration and anger of the world's poor…provide fertile soil for mobilizing resentment. Today the response to oppression does not take the form of class struggle as predicted by Marx but along ethno-religious or cultural lines as defined by local and international 'ethnic entrepreneurs.'"[5] In line with the structural-functional perspective, which gives importance to institutional and state factors in shaping intergroup relations, ethnic conflict and ethnic minority persecution have been enabled by the technological and administrative power of modern nations.[6] Although social constructions of different ethnic groups can change over time and ethnicity in twenty-first century nations is in some ways different, *ethnicity as a basis for group mobilization and intergroup conflict is a persistent factor both in the historical and the contemporary experiences of human societies.*

The title of this chapter includes a quotation from Stephen Worchel,[7] who comments on the 'forever' nature of ethnicity, an *ethnic group* consisting of people who share a sense of belonging, often based on (actual or assumed) common descent, history, culture, language, religion, or race.[8] On the one hand, ethnicity has ancient roots and is part of our primitive heritage (as Stuart Kaufman points out, "Ethnic identities have existed throughout recorded history. Even in ancient times, ethnic groups such as the Hebrews, Babylonians and Egyptians were important political actors"[9]), and, on the other hand, ethnicity is contemporary and continues to play a foundational role in our twenty-first-century societies.[10] For example, ethnicity exerts influence through *political ethnicity*, the mobilization of ethnic groups as collective political forces,[11] in the politics of both Western and non-Western societies.[12] Ethnicity continues to shape collective and individual behavior through ethnic identity, ethnic mobilization, ethnic prejudice and discrimination, ethnicity and economic inequalities, and ethnic conflict. The expectation that modernization would melt away the power of ethnicity in politics, and social relations more broadly, has not come to fruition. Instead, there has been an ethnic revival.[13] This continued influence, I argue, means that ethnicity has *low political plasticity* and is highly resistant to change.[14]

I argue that that the root of ethnicity having low political plasticity is in what is 'out there' in our socially constructed and collectively upheld collective life and not in biological factors. The characteristics of what is out there, in terms of values, stereotypes, norms, and culture broadly, are shaped by our historical experiences, including colonialism and slavery. The rigidity of cultural systems as they pertain to ethnicity, for example, in terms of the values assigned to different skin colors and stereotypes of different so-called racial groups, reflects the low political plasticity of ethnicity.

The terms 'ethnicity' and 'race' are often used interchangeably, but this is misleading. Ethnicity is a social construct based on *perceptions* among a group of people, usually of their own group and/or other groups having a common ancestry. Race refers to a group of people who share certain characteristics that are heritable and physical (such as skin color). Despite repeated exhortations that "Race is not ethnicity,"[15] the failure to treat these terms as different is common not only in psychological science but also in medical science.[16] In everyday life and in the mass media, race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably, and it is often (wrongly) assumed that by looking at the phenotype (the observable physical characteristics of a person) one arrives at an accurate idea of the genotype (the genes a person carries). However, research shows that genetic variation within ethnic groups is larger than between ethnic groups.[17]

Ethnicity has served as a continuously important basis for human behavior, particularly in the realm of intergroup competition and conflict, even though objectively the differences between ethnic groups in conflict (such as the Hutu and the Tutsi) can be minimal. The influence of ethnicity continues today as a factor in how we are treated, particularly with respect to access to resources and services. For example, ethnic minorities have received less support and been detrimentally impacted to a greater extent by the COVID-19 pandemic.[18] Ethnicity has a powerful influence in the realm of politics; for example, there is extensive evidence that people prefer to vote for candidates of their own ethnic group.[19] Inequality on the basis of ethnicity, rather than individual-based inequality, is more likely to result in collective political mobilization.[20] Being the target of ethnic discrimination and aggression also solidifies ethnic identity and makes ethnicity a more appealing path for political action.[21] In more ethnically polarized settings, voting is more likely to be influenced by ethnicity.[22]

The first section of this chapter is focused on theoretical explanations of ethnicity. Integral to this is the role of minimal or minor intergroup differences. I shall also critically discuss sociobiology and a number of other major theories used to try to explain the continued importance of ethnicity in major human societies. In the second major section of this chapter I explore the challenge associated with ethnic diversity. A question that implicitly underlies ethnic diversity concerns whether ethnically more homogeneous societies are at an advantage.

Explanations of Ethnicity

> Ethnic group members often maintain, rightly or wrongly, that they are descended from a common set of ancestors…Ethnic identity, like kinship, is commonly seen as a primordial, ascribed, essential status, not easily changed. And ethnic group relations, like relations among kin, often seem to involve something more – and more primal – than the rational pursuit of individual or class interests.
>
> Doug Jones[23]

> Social technologies are manipulatory practices, for example a leader asserting kinship ties among his people as a means for increasing their cohesion. These practices are invented and passed on culturally.
>
> Frank Salter[24]

Psychologists attempting to explain ethnicity are confronted with an enigma: On the one hand, ethnicity is forever. The forever feature of ethnic groups has led to numerous interpretations of ethnicity as something primordial, as somehow biologically based, as rooted in blood and explained by essentialism,[25] which goes back to the idea of ancient hatreds and is the oldest explanatory tradition in ethnic studies.[26] On the other hand, the changing nature of ethnic identity and manipulations by leadership has resulted in more *instrumentalist* interpretations, meaning that leaders and followers manipulate and use ethnicity when they see it as serving their own interests.[27] For instance, Salter (quoted above) points to the illustrative example of a leader claiming kinship ties between the members of his group as a way to increased group cohesion. Such manipulatory practices, according to Salter, are invented and become part of the transmissible culture. As such, the identity and assumed characteristics of ethnic groups can change over time. For example, the identity and assumed characteristics of African Americans have changed in some respects across the centuries.[28]

With respect to the forever feature of ethnicity, in many instances it does not matter whether there is or is not an objective basis for claims that there are actual kinship ties between members of an ethnic group. What matters is *the belief* that there are such ties (even though objective evidence argues against a common genetic ancestry[29]). As long as ethnic identity is based on the belief that there are kinship ties between ethnic group members, this belief will influence the behavior of ethnic group members (and others toward them). This is an important part of the stability and continuity of ethnicity. Another aspect of this continuity is that one cannot exit from an ethnic group one is born into, nor can one join a new ethnic group. This is unlike religion and nationality: One can abandon or join a religion, and one can change nationality.

Perhaps because of the widely held beliefs about the shared kin, common-origin, basis of ethnicity (both among the lay public and among researchers), sociobiological and evolutionary accounts of ethnicity have expanded.[30] These accounts interpret the gene, and not the organism, to be the unit of replication.[31] From this perspective, humans serve as vehicles for genes, and nepotism increases the survival chances of particular genes. One of the most influential sociobiological researchers is Pierre van den Berghe, who interprets ethnicity as an extension of kinship and points to the normality and universality of nepotism as evidence of our biased behavior in favor of those who share our genes.[32]

While the commonly held belief that ethnicity is based on common ancestry and shared genes is a powerful factor in ethnic identity and behavior, this

belief is not based on fact. Scientific evidence shows that "human DNA is 99.9% similar, whether we are from Europe, Asia, the Americas, or Africa … there is more genetic diversity within a single … ethnic group than between two or more groups."[33] Genetics provides a simplistic and misleading account of ethnicity, with detrimental consequences in areas such as health care.[34] Medical treatment cannot use ethnicity as a guide to genetic characteristics, because human populations cannot be accurately categorized into genetic groups based on ethnicity. Geographical location is a more accurate guide to genetic characteristics of people than is ethnicity.[35] Of course, the belief in a shared 'homeland' can have a factual basis and contribute to ethnic identity, but in some instances, even more important is the social construction of an ethnic identity – irrespective of its factual basis.

The Identity Tradition

From among the different psychological explanations of ethnicity, including realistic conflict theory, psychodynamic theories, and justice theories,[36] the most compelling is provided by social identity theory and the research developments it inspired,[37] particularly self-categorization theory.[38] From the perspective of this identity tradition established by Henri Tajfel (1919–1982) and John Turner (1947–2011), the emphasis is on individuals perceiving themselves as members of a particular social category (e.g., white American, African American, Hispanic American) and using the norms of that category as a behavioral guide. Once identification with a social category takes place, then ingroup stereotypes also influence the individual. Also, there tends to be an exaggeration of differences between the ingroup and outgroups and a minimization of differences within the ingroup.[39]

A combination of cognitive and sociopolitical factors influences which particular social categories a person identifies with. A key cognitive factor is salience, which is determined by accessibility and fit: "[G]iven two equally 'fitting' categories, the more 'accessible' one will become salient and, given two equally 'accessible' categories, the one that better 'fits' the perceptual data will become salient."[40] Thus, identification with a social category is more likely to take place if that social category comes to mind more easily and if the person's information fits with the characteristics of that social category. As to what determines the ease with which social categories come to mind and what kinds of information individuals have about social categories, these arise out of socialization processes and the integration of individuals in the larger world. Through socialization, individuals enter into society and its dominant narratives, just as society enters into individuals.[41]

When we are born, powerful social and political narratives are already in place and active in the collective life surrounding us. Integral to these narratives are depictions of ethnic groups, with their associated stereotypes and norms. For example, there are (often incorrect) narratives about biological differences between ethnic groups, including in areas such as 'genetic differences and ethnic groups' and 'inborn intelligence differences and ethnic groups.' Mainstream psychology along with the stories it has generated over time about ethnic groups, some of which have been racist,[42] is a central part of these dominant narratives in the larger society.

It is these dominant narratives that in large part explain the forever nature of ethnic groups. Changing dominant narratives involves much more than changing individual minds, because dominant narratives are out there, in the discourse of the larger society, in the education system, in folk tales, in children's stories, in myths, and in culture broadly. Also, dominant narratives can be incorrect but continue to have influence. For example, there are only minor differences between ethnic groups such as the Hutu and the Tutsi, but the dominant narratives in Rwandan society position these two groups as being inherently and enormously different. The central role of minor differences in intergroup relations and conflict was explored by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who referred to *the narcissism of minor differences*.[43]

Experimental research also highlights the power of minor intergroup differences. Empirical research using the minimal group paradigm has demonstrated that social categorization even on a minimal or trivial basis can lead to intergroup bias.[44] Minimal group paradigm studies usually follow a two-part sequence. In the first part, participants carry out a fairly trivial task, such as estimating the number of dots flashed onto a screen. In the second part, the participants are divided into two groups, such as group X and group Y, ostensibly on the basis of how they carried out the trivial task. Next, participants are asked to allocate points to the members of groups 'X' and 'Y.' The points they allocate will not come to them personally, nor do they know who is in group 'X' and group 'Y,' nor will they have any interactions with the members of group 'X' and group 'Y.' Despite this, the general tendency has been for participants in Western societies to show ingroup favoritism in point allocations.

Of course, it has been argued, with empirical support,[45] that in a context where there is only one criterion (i.e., the basis for social categorization) to guide action, that criterion will become important – even though in other contexts this criterion could be trivial. In real-world settings, such as sports stadiums, a seemingly trivial criterion, such as team colors or team membership, can become enormously important (as Bill Shankly, the Liverpool

Football Club manager said, "Some people think football is a matter of life and death. I assure you, it's much more serious than that."[46]). The minor differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi became a matter of life and death. During the 1994 genocide, each side positioned the other as not only different but subhuman and an evil group that must be annihilated.[47] It is the collective, shared, and diffuse nature of collective narratives that support the continuation of ethnicity as a powerful force in human societies.

Although ethnicity has the potential to serve as a basis for collective mobilization and conflict, certain factors will increase the probability of this process coming to fruition:

- Populist leadership and powerful elites who view ethnic mobilization and conflict as advantageous to themselves.
- A compelling narrative (often strongly shaped by ingroup interpretations of history) that legitimizes ethnic conflict.
- Strong motives (e.g., material gain) for the majority to engage in, or at least not resist, ethnic conflict.
- The design of political institutions and traditions that highlight and exaggerate ethnic differences and endorse a 'winner take all' perspective on interethnic competition.[48]
- An international context that allows or even enables ethnic conflict and ethnic minority persecution.

These factors are more likely to become effective in multiethnic, rather than ethnically more homogeneous, societies. This implies that ethnic diversity is associated with certain serious challenges.

Challenges Raised by Ethnic Diversity

Just as ethnicity is forever, the challenges raised by ethnic diversity are forever. Here I discuss the challenges in dealing with inequality, prejudice, discrimination, interethnic conflict, and genocide.

Inequality, Prejudice, and Discrimination

Ethnic diversity raises questions about the inevitability of certain problems associated with interethnic relations. Are ethnically diverse societies doomed to experience prejudice and discrimination against ethnic minorities, as well as inequalities and conflict across ethnic groups? Such questions arise from a perspective that interprets ethnic diversity as a disadvantage, as a subtractive feature that in some ways diminishes societies. From this

perspective, the greater the ethnic diversity, the more extreme the negative impact of ethnicity. William Easterly summed up research findings on the subtractive economic consequences of ethnic diversity:

> More ethnically diverse cities and counties in the United States spend less on public goods. States with more religious-ethnic heterogeneity show lower public support for higher education and lower high-school graduation rates. In Kenya, there is less funding for primary schools in more ethnically diverse districts. Ethnic diversity also predicts poor quality of government services … In U.S. cities, there is a link from ethnic diversity to bloated government payrolls. Ethnically polarized nations react more adversely to external terms of trade shocks. More foreign aid proceeds are diverted into corruption in more ethnically diverse places. Ethnic homogeneity raises social capital, or trust, which in turn is associated with faster growth and higher output per worker. The finding that ethnic heterogeneity lowers trust is confirmed with both U.S. data and cross-country data. In the United States, greater ethnic heterogeneity makes participation in social clubs less likely, which is consistent with the idea that there is not much association across groups.[49]

But there is also a positive perspective on ethnic diversity, one that proposes that societies gain by becoming more ethnically diverse. This 'additive' view argues that an ethnically more diverse society is richer and stronger, for example through the excitement and even glamor of having ethnic neighborhoods, such as 'Little Italy' and 'Chinatown.' This additive view of ethnicity is attributed as having benefited ancient empires, such as the Roman Empire, which were tolerant of diversity.[50] But tolerance was by necessity, because in ancient empires the central authorities did not have the technological weapons available to contemporary governments to enforce assimilation and homogeneity.

One of the important changes that have come about is the enormously powerful technologies, institutions, and bureaucracies at the disposal of twenty-first-century national governments to be used as weapons for trying to enforce ethnic assimilation and homogeneity. At least seventy-five countries are using artificial intelligence (AI) technologies (such as facial recognition) for surveillance, and the Chinese company Huawei is responsible for supplying AI surveillance technologies to at least fifty countries.[51] The power of AI is being used to monitor and control ethnic groups.[52] At the same time, electronic communications are also helping ethnic minorities and separatist groups, such as the Basque in Spain, the Scots in the United Kingdom, the French Quebecers in Canada, and the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran, to mobilize as distinct collective movements.

The mobilization of ethnic groups in many different regions of the world is in part a response to the inequalities and deprivations suffered by ethnic minorities in ethnically diverse societies. Thomas Piketty and others have highlighted the enormous wealth concentration taking place throughout the world,[53] and Max Haller has argued that more attention should be given to inequality not just between but also within nations.[54] A central claim made by Haller, which is supported by some other researchers,[55] is that ethnic diversity is associated with greater inequality, and more ethnically homogeneous societies enjoy more equality.

At the heart of ethnic inequality, and discrimination against ethnic minorities,[56] is the historical experiences of colonization and slavery. The long arm of this history, particularly tragic for the colonized and enslaved, has resulted in a colored class structure,[57] with whites at the top, blacks at the bottom, and other shades in between. Reacting to perceptions of group-based inequality, ethnic groups have mobilized and attempted to challenge white supremacy.[58] In Western societies, this ethnic mobilization is undoubtedly in large part a result of the increasing number of ethnic minorities. For example, in the United States by 2044 the white population is predicted to fall below 50 percent of the total population.[59] Increases in ethnic minority numbers in Western societies are being seen as a threat by the white population in Western countries,[60] as well as by the Western security establishment.[61]

The reaction of the dominant white group to 'invasions' of nonwhites reflects a behavioral tendency that probably arose out of long-term evolutionary processes. Such behaviors are associated with ingroup reactions to external threats, at a primitive level associated with how organisms deal with *invasive species*, life forms that are not native to an area under consideration and whose introduction causes harm, death, and even extinction of local life forms. The concept of invasive species has been applied to animals and plants but is also applicable to humans.[62] Just as the introduction of invasive plants and animals can threaten, and lead to 'defense' reactions from, local plants and animals, the invasions of territories by groups of humans can result in defensive reactions from locals living in an area being invaded.

The history of Western colonization in Africa, Asia, and the Americas provides numerous examples of both failed and relatively successful defensive reactions from local populations. The indigenous population of Tasmania was wiped out by European invaders, with most of the killings taking place between 1800 and the 1830s.[63] Tens of millions of indigenous American Indians were killed as Western expansion took place in the United States.[64] The population of Africa drastically reduced through European invasions, bringing with it the slavery of millions of Africans

and deadly diseases against which local Africans did not have immunity.[65] In contrast, Japan successfully isolated itself from the rest of the world, in particular keeping out Western religious missionaries, for two centuries between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.[66] Through effective defensive tactics, despite suffering defeat and invasion in World War II, Japan has emerged in the twenty-first century as an advanced industrial nation with a distinct culture.

The experiences of the Tasmanians, who were invaded and annihilated by Western colonists, and the Japanese, who for long periods excluded outsiders and continue to thrive as an independent nation and culture, demonstrate that the outcome of interethnic contact can be very different. Similarly, the outcomes of interethnic contact within societies can also be different. We can organize to achieve different kinds of outcomes in ethnically diverse societies, resulting in high or minimal levels of intergroup prejudice, discrimination, and conflict. However, such organization must be based on the recognition that the probability of certain behaviors is made more likely by our evolutionary past.

An important example of evolutionary-evolved behaviors is ethnic ingroup reactions to perceived ethnic outgroup threat. Ethnic groups that feel threatened are more likely to support aggressive authoritarian strongman leadership, be less tolerant of nonconformity and dissimilar others, and show less support for civil liberties.[67] These behaviors result in the ethnic group becoming more cohesive and unified under strong centralized leadership, in readiness to fight off aggressive foes. But becoming a more formidable and 'battle ready' ethnic group comes at a cost: lower tolerance for those who are perceived to be different.

Contemporary transportation and technologies have increased the speed with which vast numbers of ethnic outgroups can quickly move from one region of the world to another.[68] For example, millions of people rapidly moved from the Near and Middle East to Europe in the early part of the twenty-first century, driven from their homes by the turmoil caused by the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), devastating wars (such as in Syria), or extreme political repression (such as in Iran). Similarly, millions of people continue to move from South America to the United States, motivated to migrate to escape gang violence, poverty, and instability. In response to the sudden appearance of these large numbers of dissimilar outgroup members at their borders, there has been an ethnocentric backlash among white nationalists in Europe and the United States. At the extreme levels, such antioutgroup movements result in violent interethnic conflict, ethnic cleansing, and genocide, topics discussed in the next section.

Ethnic Cleansing, from Ghettoization to Genocide

Ethnic cleansing involves the removal of an ethnic population from a territory, in order to homogenize the ethnic makeup of that territory. Erin Jenne has said of ethnic cleansing, "Although the concept is relatively new, the phenomenon to which it refers is as old as human civilization itself."[69] Jenne's claim is confirmed by historical examinations, which reveal that ethnic cleansing took place repeatedly in human history and more recent ethnic cleansing is often rooted in historical narratives.[70] Examples of ethnic cleansing in the modern era include targets such as the indigenous Indians of America and various ethnic minorities in Europe.[71] Influenced by Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), one line of argument has been that the technologies and bureaucracies of modern nations states and democracies have a banal dark side that ultimately categorizes the social world into 'us' and 'them,' normalizes evil, and paves the way for ethnic cleansing.[72]

Ethnic cleansing has been implemented through a variety of strategies across history, ranging from the relatively mild 'internal transfer and ghettoization' of a population, involving the forced transfer of a group to a ghetto inside the country, to the most extreme and horrendous tactic of *genocide*, mass killing and group annihilation (see Figure 5.1).

The strategies listed on the continuum in Figure 5.1 are intended to represent important examples, rather than an exhaustive list. I now briefly discuss each of the listed strategies.

Internal Transfer and Ghettoization

The mildest form of ethnic cleansing I have listed involves the rounding up of an ethnic minority and placing them in isolation. The purpose of such isolation can be either to simply keep an ethnic group under control and away from the rest of the population or to bring about changes in the isolated group. An ongoing example of the latter is the treatment of the Uyghur minority in China; several million Uyghur Muslims have been undergoing political reeducation in special camps.[73] But Western democracies have also engaged in this kind of strategy; for example, during World War II, both in the United Kingdom and the United States certain ethnic groups deemed to be dangerous and potential 'enemies within,' such as the Japanese in the United States, suffered internment in isolated camps.[74]

Figure 5.1 Varieties of strategies for ethnic cleansing

Expulsion

The expulsion of ethnic minorities from particular territories is so common that even many large-scale expulsions tend to receive little international attention. For example, in 1989 almost 400,000 Turks and Muslims were expelled from Bulgaria, a tragedy that is largely forgotten.[75] A more recent example is the mass expulsion of the Rohingya from Myanmar.[76] Whereas 'internal transfer and ghettoization' still leaves the targeted ethnic minority within the territory of the dominant group, and thus still a responsibility of the ruling government, expulsion from a territory ostensibly frees the dominant group and ruling government from responsibility. For example, the Turks expelled from Bulgaria to Turkey in 1989 now became the responsibility of the Turkish government – even though they were forced to abandon most of their wealth back in Bulgaria.

Internal and External Ethnic War

Both in the modern era and historically, ethnicity has regularly served as the basis of both civil wars and interstate wars, as Lars-Erik Cederman points out in *Foreign Affairs*: "Ethnic nationalism is most likely to lead to civil war, but it can also trigger interstate war by encouraging leaders to make the sorts of domestic appeals that can increase tensions with foreign countries."[77] Some of the most ferocious ethnic conflicts arise out of efforts by a numerical majority to overcome the military stranglehold of a numerical minority, an example being attempts by the Sunni majority to overthrow the murderous Assad regime (which is Shiite, and backed by Shiite Iran) in Syria.[78] Because many ethnic groups are dispersed across national boundaries, in some cases governments see it as necessary to intervene in other states in order to protect the interests of 'their ethnic ingroup.' For example, in 2022 the Russian government has invaded Ukraine, ostensibly to protect the interests of Russians and Russian speakers who live in the Ukraine[79] – the result being conflict with countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which includes the United States.

Genocide

Genocide, the most extreme form of ethnic cleansing, has a long history in human societies.[80] However, a number of researchers have convincingly argued that the administrative, organizational, and technological weapons at the disposal of modern states means that genocide can now be carried out far more effectively and efficiently.[81] On the other hand, optimistically one could argue that globalization and the advancement of technology also means that news about genocides in the twenty-first century, such as in Darfur, in North Kivu (Democratic Republic of Congo), and the Rohingya (Myanmar), spreads rapidly and globally, thus giving opportunities for genocide to be opposed and for perpetrators to be punished. Also, optimistically one could add that there are now international institutions, such as the International Court of Justice at the Hague, that can act to implement justice no matter where in the world a genocide is committed. However, these international mechanisms have failed to prevent genocide in the modern era.

Concluding Comment

Ethnicity has low political plasticity and is a continuously important factor in the everyday lives of many people in the twenty-first century. Topics such as prejudice and discrimination continue to be central in psychology,[82] because of the high salience and influence of ethnicity in everyday life. Ethnicity continues to play an important role in political behavior, having an impact on voting patterns and political support for individual candidates and political groups. That is why politicians such as Donald Trump attempt to appeal to particular ethnic groups and give signals of their ethnic biases, such as Trump's well-publicized speeches against Mexican immigrants and his 'Muslim ban' against people from Middle East countries.[83]

Modernization has not diluted the power of ethnicity in influencing behavior. Far from it, ethnicity has become an even more important theme in our twenty-first-century world. From the perspective of left-wing critics, powerful elites (who control the mass media, education system, and other means of high influence) have manufactured ethnicity as a more dominant theme because it distracts from social class and helps to sidetrack movements that might otherwise lead to class conflict. But these left-wing criticisms still accept that such outcomes are possible only because of the high potential of ethnicity for serving as a basis for identity and collective mobilization.

CHAPTER 6

Religion, Eternally Present but with a Thousand Faces

Religion, beliefs in divine powers and the implementation of rituals and practices directed to such powers,[1] has been expected, according to secularization theory,[2] to be in a state of decline as science and technology advance and replace religious explanations. An important aspect of religion is spirituality, which involves awareness of a transcendental dimension to existence.[3] The advancement and global spread of higher education,[4] as well as science,[5] which demands empirical proof and the objective testing of hypotheses, would seem to go against religious belief in divine powers, which cannot be scientifically known or assessed. The rise in scores on intelligence tests in the general population over time and across generations around the world also suggests that the influence of religion should decline,[6] since almost a century of research has established that there is a negative relationship between religiosity and intelligence.[7] People who score higher on intelligence tests have less faith in religion, and as scores on intelligence tests increase around the world, one would expect religiosity to also decline. From this perspective, then, religion should be becoming weaker in the twenty-first century, and the influence of religion on political behavior should also be in decline. But the role and impact of religion in societies around the world have proved to be extremely resilient to change and complex.[8]

On the one hand, there is evidence that there has been a global decline in religion in the early twenty-first century. Reporting on international studies on trends in religiosity, Ronald Inglehart claims, "From about 2007 to 2019, the overwhelming majority of the countries we studied – 43 out of 49 – became less religious. This decline in belief was not confined to high-income countries and appeared across most of the world."[9] This decline in religiosity has been reported even in the United States, a country that once seemed to be impervious to global trends in the weakening of religion.[10] On the other hand, studies on the separation of church and state clearly show that such separation has *not*

taken place as expected in line with a decline in religion, so that religion continues to have a powerful impact on politics and government in most societies.[11] Although countries that are more democratic have a higher level of separation of church and state, the recent weakening of democracies, including in the United States,[12] has been accompanied by fuzzier lines between church and state even in democracies. In particular, the power of the religious right in US politics continues.[13] Also, there are signs that the picture of 'religion in decline' is too simplistic and is being challenged by some researchers. For example, the Danish researcher Hans Ruan Iversen claims, "Ninety percent of the … people on this planet are thoroughly religious-minded – and they will probably continue to be so."[14] Also, a religious resurgence is taking place in some societies.[15]

My own experience with religious resurgence came through my living and researching in Islamic countries. After decades of modernization and the rapid expansion of higher education under the shah, Iran experienced a major revolution in 1979. The shah was ousted, but instead of a turn to democracy, the tragic outcome of the revolution in Iran was a return to Islamic dictatorship and repressive rule by mullahs. This was another example of how the physical and social networks of religious groups, built up over many centuries and sometimes millennia, give them an enormous advantage in shaping and undertaking political activities, particularly in times of turmoil such as after major revolutions that topple governments. I witnessed different manifestations of the resurgence of Islam during my research in other Islamic societies, including Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco, the Philippines, Malaysia, Egypt, and Indonesia, the most populous Islamic country.

In order to better identify the larger communal-societal role of religion, it is useful to differentiate between different types of private and shared informal spiritual and formal religious experiences among individuals and collectives. I have identified four alternative forms of religious experience, listed below. By far the most important type of experience in the context of this discussion is formal collective religious ceremonies (#4).

1. *Informal Individual Spiritual Experience*

   Most people who report being religious have a personal sense of the divine, a belief in God or something beyond the material world.[16] This is often a private feeling, sometimes mystical, experienced by them personally as individuals.

2. *Informal Collective Spiritual Experience*

   At times a group of individuals who have gathered informally engage in spontaneous activities that result in a shared spiritual experience. For example, these individuals might have gathered to remember a departed person or past event (such as a tragedy during which many people died), narrate stories about the departed, or sing or play musical instruments, or read, or pray together for comfort. Out of such spontaneous activities often emerge spiritual experiences for the group.

3. *Formal Individual Religious Ceremony*

   People often engage in formal religious activities as individuals. In such cases, believers interact individually in a formal religious context, such as when Catholic believers individually take part in confession or when Jewish believers individually say prayers on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

4. *Formal Collective Religious Ceremony*

   By far the most influential religious practice is the formal collective religious ceremony. It is in these ceremonies that religious officials (priests, imams, rabbis, etc.) exert direct control over people in public settings, lead them in prayers, deliver sermons telling people how they should behave, and generally reinforce conformity and obedience among community members.

But why do people continue to engage in such religious activities? In the rest of this chapter, I examine limitations on political plasticity in the domain of religion. The main question I address is, why does religion continue to have a powerful influence in societies? Why has religion not disappeared, as predicted by secularization theory? First, I discuss research on the sources of religion. The focus in this first section is mainly on cognition and processes inside individuals. Next, I explore those social, cultural, and material characteristics of the world 'out there' outside individuals that sustain and strengthen religion.

The Evolutionary Roots of Religion

In examining the sources of religion, it is useful to distinguish between different types of religious experiences and practices. Research on genetics in this domain, popularized by books such as *The God Gene*,[17] focuses more on the sources of spirituality and not directly on the institutions and collective practices, ceremonies, and movements organized through formal religions. The major formal religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, have

enormous power as global economic and political organizations; they are extremely successful as international businesses (Adam Smith discussed religions as business enterprises in *The Wealth of Nations*[18]). After all, how many international businesses can boast of having lasted for thousands of years?

Of course, the argument could be made that it is the individual experience of spirituality and a sense that there are things (particularly divine powers) other than our material world that enable the formation of institutionalized religions. But presumably spirituality could manifest itself in different ways and could lead to different outcomes in the larger society. Even if there is a genetic basis for a sense of spirituality, the practical outcome need not be the kinds of institutionalized religions, with their particular political biases and consequences, that exist today. As Margaret Rappaport and Christopher Corbally describe it,[19] religion is a *nonobligatory* trait of humankind, even though it has neurocognitive roots. We have the capacity for spiritual experiences but we might not put this capacity into practice, and the kinds of institutions and practices we build out of such experiences could be very different from the mainstream formal religions of today.

There are two main questions that I address with respect to religion. The first, discussed in this section, concerns the evolutionary roots of spiritual experiences: From a functional perspective why did these behaviors evolve? In the next section I discuss the second question, which is about the role of the world 'out there' in supporting religion: What factors have influenced religion to grow as an economic, political, and cultural force in major societies?

With respect to the evolutionary roots of religion, one possibility is that religion evolved as a mechanism to achieve cooperation between nonkin. Relationships among kin can be explained by sociobiologists (as discussed in Chapter 5 on the basis of genetic similarity: People are hardwired to favor genetically similar others (i.e., their kin), as evolution involves competition between gene pools and humans serve as convenient carriers of genes. But cooperation and altruism among nonkin are more difficult to explain from a sociobiological, and more broadly an evolutionary, perspective. This is where religion can play a role. The explanations that evolutionary researchers have provided for the development of religion are of two types: 'adaptationist' and 'byproduct.'[20]

The Adaptationist Approach

One group of researchers believe that religion evolved as an adaptation, a behavior that confers advantages on an organism or species to become more successful in its environment. In particular, the adaptation argument

focuses on the cohesion, cooperation, and sacrifices that take place among *nonkin* who are members of the same religion. Religious belief is capable of binding nonkin individuals together and creating a strong ingroup, whose members show high levels of dedication, cooperation, altruism, and even self-sacrifice, giving the group an adaptive advantage.

The adaptationist approach would lead us to expect religion to be associated with some advantages for believers, and there is evidence to support this expectation. First, a number of major reviews of the research literature have established that religiosity has positive consequences for mental health,[21] although some reviews identify a weaker impact.[22] Jeff Levin has summarized this research literature in this way: "[R]eligious involvement, broadly defined, exhibits a salutary and primary-preventive function in relation to psychological distress and outcomes related to mental health and well-being. Findings are consistent, and a protective effect of religiousness seems to be especially salient among older adults." Second, the positive impact of religion on mental health has been identified in fairly diverse samples.[23] Third, religion helps people cope better with suffering, including natural disasters, illness, and the death of a loved one.[24] Fourth, religion helps people achieve greater *self-control*, inhibiting behaviors that are self-serving (e.g., stealing from neighbors) and promoting behaviors that help the community (e.g., helping the needy in the village).[25] These research findings fit with the interpretation of religion as having evolved as an adaptation, to help people cope better with their environments.

The Byproduct Approach

A competing explanation is that religion is a byproduct of human cognitive architecture.[26] Researchers in this camp focus on the important role that intentional agents play in the lives of humans and how essential it is that humans accurately recognize intentional agents in their surroundings.[27] From a survival perspective, it is argued, humans benefit by being hypervigilant in recognizing intentional agents. For example, it is more adaptive to imagine that a leopard rather than the wind is moving through and stirring the long grass in a nearby field, because the cost is too high of mistakenly imagining the wind when it is actually a leopard. This need for high attentivity to potential intentional agents in the environment has resulted in the development of the cognitive Hyperactive Agency Detection Device (HADD). Once an intentional agent is identified in the environment, then a cognitive system known as Theory of Mind (ToM) produces inferences about the motivational state of the identified agent.

The hyperactive nature of our cognitive system when it seeks intentional agents leads us to literally see 'faces in the clouds,'[28] as Stewart Guthrie puts it. Justin Barrett and Jonathan Lanman claim that "having a HADD experience with no obvious natural explanation in a location that one has been told is the site of frequent divine appearances will make belief in those appearances more plausible."[29] This seems more likely to happen for some individuals who are more inclined to project images and things onto ambiguous objects. I witnessed exactly this kind of projection during the time of the revolution in Iran, when followers of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1900–1989) extatically proclaimed that they miraculously saw his face when they gazed up at the moon. But no matter how hard nonbelievers stared at the moon, they could not see Khomeini's face. This highlights individual differences and suggests that prior belief is also influential in how we interpret intentional agents in the environment.

In conclusion, then, the adaptationist and byproduct interpretations both view religion as an outcome of evolutionary processes. The focus of both interpretations is cognition within individuals and how the nature of human cognition has given rise to religion. Next, I turn to consider an alternative source of religion, giving priority to the collective processes 'out there' in the wider world, rather than cognitive processes within individuals.

Explanations of the Continuity of Religion That Focus on Collective Processes

The major religions are now global enterprises, with enormous financial wealth, as well as considerable political and cultural clout. Rather than being replaced by science and technology, religious explanations continue side by side with scientific and technological explanations. The coexistence of supernatural (e.g., religious) and natural (e.g., scientific) explanations is not just a fleeting phase found in children, as assumed in some developmental research, but also prevalent among adults.[30] The same people endorse the idea that humans evolved from earlier forms of life, as well as the idea that humans were created in their present shape in the last 10,000 years. Some university graduates with advanced science degrees from leading universities in industrialized countries continue to give priority to supernatural explanations for certain events. A prominent example is Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the National Institutes of Health (2009–2021), who tried to explain his position as a Christian and a scientist in *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence of Belief*.[31]

Thus, the secularization thesis that religion would be replaced by scientific explanations is not proved correct by events. Even in Russia, where communist authorities attempted to minimize the role of religion when Russia was part of the (now collapsed) Soviet Union, religion survived and is once again thriving.[32] This is largely because religion serves important functions in the larger world, rather than just being about beliefs in the minds of independent individuals. For example, religion helps to shape collective identity and community. Participating in religious practices that require gathering in groups helps to build moral communities,[33] which serve to regulate behavior and also give individuals a sense of belonging.

The evolutionary explanations of religion we considered earlier in this chapter, focusing on the adaptationist and byproduct viewpoints, interpret continuity in relation to cognitive processes inside individuals. But even if we accept the argument that religion has cognitive roots within individuals that emerged through evolution, this does not explain the societal characteristics of major religions and their particular social, economic, and political manifestations. Nor does it explain the way religious institutions have taken shape and the way they function in the larger world. I now turn to interpretations of the continuity of religion that focus more on collective process.

The Terror Management Role of Religion

Terror Management Theory provides one such interpretation of religion, with an eye to the function of religion in the larger society.[34] The point of departure for this theory is the observation that we humans are aware that we will someday die, and this has psychological consequences: "The potential for terror this knowledge creates leads us to seek shelter in the form of cultural worldviews that give life meaning and permanence, give us the opportunity to view ourselves as valuable, and provide some hope of transcending death."[35] The worldview that religion provides helps people to believe in life everlasting, so that faithful believers expect to experience eternal life in heaven after physical death. Faith in everlasting life is reinforced by constant participation in collective religious practices and ceremonies, where similar-minded others endorse one's religious worldview and the belief that 'we believers in the one and only true religion' are going to live forever in heaven.

The Terror Management Theory perspective lines up with Karl Marx's (1818–1883) famous description of religion as the opium of the people,[36] as a drug that relieves human suffering (and also saps the lower classes of political energy and prevents their collective mobilization to overthrow the ruling class). In line with the opium of the people interpretation, research

shows that as nations develop, achieve higher education and science levels, and become less religious, the suffering of the lower social classes *increases* – presumably because they no longer benefit from the 'opium of the people' protection provided by religion.[37] This suffering is even greater, in the shape of poorer health, in countries where wealth inequality is larger and the lower classes experience higher relative deprivation.[38]

But similar to the evolutionary adaptationist and byproduct interpretations, the Terror Management Theory interpretation could be faulted for assuming intrapersonal processes (in this case the feeling of terror that arises from the human knowledge of mortality and certain death) to be the starting point of religion. An alternative is to look outside to larger collective processes, to social groups and group-based inequalities, and the role of religion in maintaining the social order. From this perspective, continuity in religion and particularly the role of religion in politics are explained not by motivations or cognitions within individuals but by what is needed in order to sustain the continuation of social orders that are characterized by enormous group-based inequalities.

A Materialist View of Religious Continuity

A focus on collective rather than intraindividual processes also requires an evolutionary perspective. The development of an increasingly large surplus and the emergence of bigger human settlements from around 10,000 years ago were associated with the growth of centralized leadership and social stratification (as discussed in Chapter 3 of this book). Through control of the surplus in society, some individuals and groups came to enjoy a great deal more power, prestige, and wealth than other individuals and groups. One way to protect this superiority was by brute force: The power elite employs an army and other security forces to protect its superior position from internal and external enemies. But a subtler and even more effective strategy for protecting inequalities in the social and political system has been to develop ideologies that peacefully persuade people that they live in a just and legitimate society. Religion is one such ideology, together with communism and capitalism.

The Italian researcher Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923) has persuasively argued that all societies are governed by an elite, who use different ideologies, including religion, to convince the non-elite that society is legitimate and fair.[39] The elite survive and enjoy their superior position as long as they allow circulation of talent: Talented individuals born to non-elite members must be allowed to rise up and join the elite, and individuals lacking talent born to the elite must be allowed to drop down to the non-elite.

But all elites eventually close up and refuse to allow circulation of talent, with the result that talented individuals born to non-elite members tire of being trapped in the non-elite and mobilize the non-elite masses to overthrow the ruling elite. Pareto described history as "a graveyard of aristocracies,"[40] with one elite after another falling to counter-elite revolutions (in *The Republic*, Plato provided a very similar account of the role of the circulation of talent in safeguarding society[41]). But after a counter-elite successfully leads the non-elite masses to overthrow an old elite, the counter-elite simply takes the place of the dethroned elite, maintains group-based inequalities with itself enjoying superiority at the top, and continues to rule as the new elite.

From Pareto's perspective, the different ideologies used to justify elite rule are simply covers, used to camouflage and justify inequalities. The various religions, as well as ideologies such as communism and capitalism, serve the same legitimization function. In this respect, Pareto's elite theory lines up with Marx's 'opium of the people' interpretation of religion, but the two differ in their view on the historical development of societies. Whereas Marx sees historical development in stages – feudalism, capitalism, socialism – with the classless society as the eventual outcome, Pareto sees perpetual elite rule in all societies but under different cover ideologies. Pareto's view of historical development is cyclical, with one elite replacing another, one legitimization ideology replacing another, but group-based inequalities and elite rule continuing forever.

To those who argue that religion can serve to mobilize the downtrodden to overthrow dictators, Pareto responds that such religious revolutions simply result in one elite being replaced by another. For example, from Pareto's perspective the revolution in Iran simply resulted in the dictator shah and his Westernized entourage being replaced by the dictator ayatollah and his entourage in Eastern camouflage. The surface characteristics of the ruling elite changed in Iran, but elite rule continued. The ideological camouflage of the regime changed, but dictatorship continued.

A number of characteristics concerned with collective life have enabled religion to achieve continuity over thousands of years as the most powerful and effective legitimizing ideology, justifying enormous group-based inequalities and continued elite rule. The first characteristic is material and has to do with the nature of the built environment: Houses of worship (churches, mosques, synagogues, etc.) serve to perpetuate and support the continuity of religion. For thousands of years, houses of worship have typically been the most imposing, grand, and durable buildings in villages, small towns, and large cities. The

construction and maintenance of houses of worship have required enormous sacrifices and investments from communities.

Houses of worship serve different historic functions, which support the continuity of religion. First, they serve as physically imposing landmarks linking the past to the present and future. Robert Brenneman and Brian Miller have pointed out that "religious buildings from the past continue to exert influence on later social groups. The structures do not just sit benignly; they materially affect groups using the buildings and those in the neighborhood … the symbolic dimensions of buildings extend well beyond the religious sphere."[42] The symbolic dimensions of religious building are particularly well served by grand cathedrals, mosques, and synagogues, which have long functioned as centers of gathering on religious pilgrimages – for example, as described in the fourteenth century by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340–1400) in *The Canterbury Tales*.[43] Although the social context in which the great Gothic cathedrals were built is very different from our twenty-first-century world,[44] those cathedrals help to sustain the Christian religion, and the tradition of cathedral building continues today. For example, according to the tradition that cathedrals should take a long time to build, the Washington National Cathedral in the United States took almost the entire twentieth century to complete and is in the English Gothic style of the fourteenth century.

Because religious buildings tend to be solid and imposing, and to represent a large resource investment on the part of communities, they tend not to be destroyed – even after revolutions that bring antireligious regimes to power. For example, after the 1917 revolution that brought communists to power in Russia, the most important religious constructions were preserved, and these buildings helped to launch a religious revival from the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Between 1988 and 2016, the number of working churches in Russia increased from 7,000 to 34,764.[45] After the conquest or reconquest of a region, religious buildings are often converted for use rather than be destroyed by the new regime in power. For example, as the expulsion of the Moors from Spain took place, Muslim mosques were converted to Christian churches.[46] But as the Muslim population in Europe increases and religiosity among European Christians declines, there are now examples of Christian Churches being converted to Muslim Mosques.[47]

Religious belief systems are dynamic and continually changing, and this flexibility also sustains the continuity of religion. The ability of religions to adapt to local conditions and belief systems creates greater resilience even in the face of hostility.[48] For example, the communist society of Vietnam

would seem to be a hostile environment for religion, but religion has survived through adaptation and fusion with local belief systems. In discussing religious traditions in Vietnam, Edyta Roszko argues that "the thesis that modernization and re-structuring of Asian societies in the name of 'progress' would lead to their secularization … failed to materialize."[49] Like the survival of religious buildings, sometimes through adaptation of the building so that it comes to serve one religion rather than another, religious belief systems also tend to adapt as a means to survive, ensuring religious continuity.

Concluding Comment

Religion was supposed to decline as science and education progress, but the resilience of religion continues around the world, as does the influence of religion on political behavior.[50] Those motivated to gain political power know that religion presents them with unparalleled opportunities, either directly ruling as religious leaders (e.g., in Iran) or using religion to mobilize political support for themselves, particularly through the invocation of hot button issues such as abortion (e.g., as in the United States[51]). The resilience and power of religion derive from convictions and faith bolstered by solid material religious buildings, some of which have lasted for over a thousand years, and also by historic traditions imbedded in our calendars and daily routines. As many revolutionaries have discovered, for example in communist China, Cuba, Vietnam, and Russia, religion is extremely difficult to eradicate. Those attempting to achieve more progressive societies, where women enjoy equal status and power with men, have also found traditional religion difficult to overcome.

The religious systems have infiltrated the everyday lives of people, so they are now part of the cultural fabric of societies. There are also almost countless characteristics of our twenty-first-century cultures that serve the continuity of religion but without us explicitly recognizing this role. For example, many events in the calendars we use to plan and regulate our twenty-first-century lives are derived from religion (obvious ones being Christmas and Easter in Christian societies, Norooz in Near Eastern societies). As many revolutionaries have learned, changing calendars is far easier than changing actual behavior patterns in a population. This continuity is why the Russian dictator Vladimir Putin found it relatively easy to revise the central role of the Russian Orthodox Church in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and also why despite running a ruthless dictatorship the mullahs in Iran have not been able to eradicate the pre-Islamic Norooz celebrations.

CHAPTER 7

The Built Environment and Behavioral Continuity

The Tower of London was built under the orders of William the Conqueror (1028–1087), after he led the Norman army to victory over the Anglo-Saxons at the Battle of Hastings (1066) and ruled as the first Norman king of England (1066–1087). Over the next thousand years the Tower of London was used as a prison, a royal residence, an armory, a public records office, a treasury, a home for the Crown Jewels of England and for the Royal Mint. The meaning and interpretation of the Tower of London has changed in some respects over the centuries, particularly with the advent of mass tourism,[1] but throughout this time the Tower has retained a central place in English (and later British) national identity. Attesting to its widespread influence, the Tower has given its name to an influential psychological test developed in England,[2] and it also had a key role in English literature, such as in Shakespeare's play *Richard III* (1597–1623) when the two little princes (Edward V and Richard Duke of York) are murdered in the Tower.

The Tower of London and other heritage architectural buildings represent one way in which the *built environment*, the surroundings for human activity that have been built or changed by humans, influences how we behave.[3] The Tower particularly influences collective memory and national identity among the British, as well as how others perceive the British. But the Tower has also influenced behavior more directly, intimidating those who would challenge the ruling power in the country, particularly in earlier centuries, when the Tower was a dominant military presence overlooking London.

Heritage buildings are one example of how the built environment influences human behavior in important ways. Since the late twentieth century, this impact has been the focus of not only psychologists but also geographers, architects, and city planners, among other groups of experts.[4] Because the built environment is constructed to last, often for very long time periods, it has an influence that also continues over the long term. In this chapter I

examine the continuity in behavior brought about by the built environment. My argument is that political plasticity is necessarily limited through the influence of the built environment; this is something that is explicitly recognized by revolutionaries in their struggles to bring about change through and after revolutions (discussed in Chapter 8 of this book).

There are various ways in which the built environment influences human behavior and different perspectives on the extent of this influence. In the first section of this chapter, I examine the major schools of psychology and their different perspectives on the impact of the built environment on behavior. Next, I focus particularly on continuity in collective memory and identity and discuss the role of national heritage sites in behavioral continuity. As part of this discussion, I also consider efforts by revolutionaries and radical change programs to transform behavior by reshaping the built environment. Finally, I discuss the symbiotic relationship between human behavior and the global warming: how we impact global warming and how global warming is impacting us.

Schools of Psychology and the Impact of the Built Environment

All the major schools of psychology agree that the built environment influences human behavior in important ways, but the schools differ markedly in how much influence they assume the built environment actually exerts. Some schools assume that humans are born with little or no hardwiring and behavior can be completely shaped by environmental conditions. Other schools assume that humans are born already predisposed to experience the world and to behave in certain ways because of the extensive hardwiring already in place at birth. This hardwiring is assumed to limit the impact of the built environment on behavior. We can conceive of a continuum, with complete absence of hardwiring, humans born as blank slates (the Lockian *tabula rasa*) and completely shaped by environmental conditions at one extreme and at the other extreme humans born with strong hardwiring and environmental conditions having far less impact (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 The continuum of blank slate to strong hardwiring, with major schools of psychology located on the continuum

On the blank slate end of the continuum, the most extreme group is the radical behaviorists, launched by John Watson (1878–1958) through the so-called behaviorist manifesto in 1913 and dominant in psychology for the next half century.[5] Integral to this manifesto was the idea that in order to be a science, psychology must discard all references to consciousness, subjectivity, and free will. All behavior is assumed to be shaped by causal stimulus–response associations. Leading behaviorists proposed that human societies are at present seriously dysfunctional because we refuse to accept that human behavior is causally determined by the environment, and we must discard the assumption of free will and implement programs to reengineer the environment to correctly shape human behavior.[6] Consequently, from a behaviorist perspective the built environment is enormously important in (re)shaping human behavior.

Social constructionist psychology, which gained influence in the 1980s, also places considerable importance on the role of the environment in shaping human behavior, but in this case the 'environment' largely consists of the socially constructed world and the shared narratives that surround us from our birth.[7] According to this perspective, it is narrative interpretations and depictions of the built environment, collectively created and upheld, that shape human behavior. The same built environment might be interpreted differently by different groups, with implications that are also different for behavior. For example, the same statue or building can be interpreted by group 'X' as celebrating a war hero but by group 'Y' as symbolizing a slave master and a racist system from the colonial past, something that must be torn down.

Humanistic psychology and Gestalt psychology accept that the built environment impacts behavior, but each assume certain types of inbuilt human characteristics. Humanistic psychology, particularly as influenced by Abraham Maslow (1908–1970), proposes that humans are born with basic human needs and an inclination to grow and self-actualize.[8] The built environment could help individuals achieve self-actualization. Gestalt psychologists also conceive of an important role for the built environment to enable humans to show initiative and creativity,[9] and they also demonstrate the impact of hardwiring particularly on how humans perceive and interact with the built environment. Thus, humanistic psychology and Gestalt psychology assume that the inbuilt tendencies of humans can be developed through particular environmental designs.

Psychoanalysis and cognitive psychology are similar in that they assume even stronger hardwiring than the schools discussed so far, but they differ

markedly in what they propose is hardwired. Freud and his followers propose that humans are born with strong inbuilt instincts, particularly aggression and self-centeredness. In the process of socialization, clashes arise between the morality of society and the inbuilt instincts of individuals. In this process, repression and other defense mechanisms help individuals maneuver and try to balance their basic urges and the demands of 'civilization,' leading to more and more psychological material that is unacceptable to society being pushed into the growing unconscious.[10] The impact of the built environment on individual behavior is mediated by factors in the unconscious, of which individuals are unaware. Similarly, cognitive psychology gives importance to implicit processes (which function outside conscious awareness) that mediate the relationship between individuals and the built environment. In the case of cognitive psychology, neural networks and cognitive mechanisms are assumed to provide strong hardwiring, limiting how much behavior can be (re)shaped by the built environment.[11]

Among the major schools, evolutionary psychology probably assumes the strongest hardwiring.[12] Human behavior is assumed to be shaped in important ways by genetic makeup; for example, altruism and aggression are assumed to be largely shaped by genetic similarity and dissimilarity. The strong influence of evolutionary factors means that there is less room for the built environment to (re)shape behavior.

Thus, there are differences in the extent to which the major schools of psychology assume the built environment can influence human behavior. Behaviorists assume that all human behavior is environmentally shaped, whereas evolutionary psychologists propose that the environment has far less influence because of extensive hardwiring.

Some parts of the built environment have a stronger impact on behavior. An example of this is buildings, monuments, and other features of heritage architecture, discussed next.

Continuity through Architectural Heritage

> Historic preservation is inherently concerned with collective memory.
>
> Melinda Milligan[13]

> Significant architectural and historical monuments become an important point of reference for the local population, increasing their sense of security, and act as an important factor shaping social identity.
>
> Julia Sowinska-Heim[14]

National heritage buildings, such as the Tower of London, the White House in the United States, the Great Wall of China, the Taj Mahal in India, the Pyramids of Egypt, Persepolis in Iran, Machu Picchu in Peru, Petra in Jordan, the Colosseum in Rome, among many others, are parts of the built environment that play a particularly important role in sustaining continuity in human behavior. They serve as *cultural carriers*,[15] means through which central values, identities, and normative systems broadly are propagated and passed on across generations (discussed in Chapter 2 of this book). Continuity is a central theme in The World Heritage Convention,[16] adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1972. Articles 4 and 5 of the Convention place particular stress on continuity, calling for the identification, protection, and transmission to future generations of the valued cultural heritage.

Although twenty-first-century urban landscapes tend to be characterized by restlessness and change, there is also a strong theme of continuity, even in a relatively young society such as the United States.[17] As Elvin Wyly points out, US urban centers are continually changing, but "[o]n the other hand key features of the urban landscape display remarkable durability."[18] The theme of continuity is even stronger in societies with longer histories. For example, according to Andrew Kipnis social transformation in China involves what he calls recombinant urbanization, where the old is recycled and reintegrated into the new.[19] Essential components of this continuity are the historic centers of cities, as well as national heritage buildings, including memorials of different types.[20]

The city and the built environment more broadly are integral to collective memory.[21] Before we are born, there is already in place a built environment with historic meanings, represented in collective memory. There already exist shared narratives about places and the role of significant buildings and other features of the built environment in the shared history of 'our people.' These shared narratives are carried across time and place through stories, poems, pictures of different types, memorials, music and songs, and numerous other forms of representations. The representation of the built environment in collective memory does not rely on individual minds but persists 'out there' in the wider, collaboratively constructed and collectively upheld cultural world. Collective memory of the built environment engulfs the newborn infant and provides a strong structure for interpreting and understanding the world.

For example, an infant born in London, England, is already surrounded by an enormous variety of collectively shared narratives about the Tower of London. Even without having visited the Tower, the young child

growing up in London directly or indirectly learns about the Tower in the context of British history and identity, as well as about the historic center of the city. For example, by being taught English literature at school in London, the young child will learn (e.g., through the works of Shakespeare and Charles Dickens, among others) about the different parts and buildings of the city (e.g., The Old Curiosity Shop, in the Holborn district of London, which features in Dickens's novel of the same name). Through these experiences, the child takes on narratives that are integral to the collective memory of London. This collective memory precedes and envelopes the personal memory developed by the child.

The individual memories of children take shape on the foundation, and within the structure, of the collective memories that are already in place prior to their arrival. For example, imagine a child born in London who visits the Tower of London for the first time at the age of eight. This child already has been influenced by the collective memory of her group about the Tower. When she now enters the Tower on a visit with her school group, she carries with her the numerous shared narratives about the Tower that have directly and indirectly reached and enveloped her. Before setting out on this school trip, her teacher gave her class a special lesson on the Tower, the highlights of its history, and what they should look for during their visit. Thus, the child is strongly guided by the collective memory as she enters the Tower and develops richer personal memories through her own visit.

Collective memory and the relationship between collective memory and personal memory are dynamic and change through both collective experiences of groups and personal experiences of individuals. For example, the collective memory of the Tower of London has changed over the last thousand years, so there is some change in what has been passed on to each generation of children as narratives and representations of the Tower. Also, as individuals personally experience the Tower, their individual memories change, and this influences their interpretations of collective memories about the Tower. For example, the eight-year-old child visiting the Tower for the first time might have special experiences, such as being particularly fascinated by the Crown Jewels kept in the Tower, and this might change her interpretation of the stories passed down to her by her teachers, her family, and others about the Tower.

Architectural heritage buildings are not only strongly associated with collective memory but also integral to identity, influencing how we conceptualize and act on the kinds of people we believe we are. The built environment in general and architectural heritage buildings in particular help

us to retain character. As Thomas Yarrow has argued, buildings and other elements of the built environment retain character, including national character (such as Scottish character).[22] Certain elements in the built environment, such as heritage architecture buildings, come to be seen as an essential part of 'our group's character.' Debates about heritage conservation focus on decisions about what parts of a heritage architecture building can be changed (restored, revised, added to) without harming the inherent character of the building.

The central role of heritage architecture in collective identity becomes particularly clear during conflicts, when one group is attempting to defend its own heritage architecture against attacks by an enemy group. For example, St. Paul's Cathedral (designed by Sr. Christopher Wren, 1632–1723, and completed in 1710[23]) became a symbol of British survival and resistance against intense German aerial bombing during World War II. After repeated attacks, Herbert Mason on December 29, 1940, took an iconic photograph that became widely known under the title *St. Paul's Survives*. The 'miraculous' survival of St. Paul's Cathedral became a symbol of unshakable British resolve.

Revolutionaries have also recognized and tried to combat the important role of heritage architecture, and the built environment broadly, in sustaining continuity in behavior (as discussed in Chapter 8 of this book). They have adopted a number of strategies to try to transform the role of the built environment, from one that sustains continuity to one that stimulates change. At the simplest level, after coming to power revolutionaries change the names of cities, heritage buildings, streets, and other features of the built environment. Typically, the new names celebrate revolutionary dates, events, leaders, and 'martyrs for the cause of the revolution.' At the second level, revolutionaries change the ways in which the built environment is used, such as transforming a 'grand palace,' previously owned privately and used by an elite family as one of their homes, into a museum or a home collectively shared by hundreds of ordinary families. Third, revolutionaries attempt to construct new buildings in line with the ideals of the revolution, such as by building more affordable public housing for ordinary people. But in these endeavors, revolutionaries are hampered by traditions in architectural and building design.

After revolutions, new revolutionary regimes inherit a built environment that sustains behavior as it was *before* the revolution. The inherited built environment includes millions of individual houses, built for traditional families. As Dick Vestbro and Liisa Horelli explain, "In individual houses, the conservative patterns of the culture tend to dominate."[24]

That is, the traditional family (consisting of a male husband, female wife, and their children) is sustained by the design of the traditional single-family house. Revolutionaries who plan to change the behavior of people in the postrevolution society through changing the family are faced with the enormous challenge of changing both the vast numbers of individual houses already built and the designs and techniques for building houses in the future. Both changing existing houses and changing the design of future houses in a way that stimulates change in line with the goals of the revolution have proved to be insurmountable obstacles, limiting the change brought about by revolutions.

Whereas heritage architecture involves the continuing influence of the past on human behavior, global warming is an example of how the built environment shapes our future, as discussed in the next section.

Human Behavior, the Natural Environment, and Global Warming

Continuity in human behavior is reflected in our historic interactions with the natural environment, which is now all part of the built environment because we humans have impacted all of the natural world.[25] If anyone doubts this, think about the temperature changes we have brought about (discussed in this section), from which no part of planet earth can remain isolated. Through our impact on the oceans, lands, forests, the air, and all other features of the natural world, we have influenced human individual and collective behavior. Because our impact on the natural world and the resulting built environment has taken shape over such long time periods, the impact of the built environment on our behavior is also very long term and extremely slow to change.

The symbiotic relationship between human behavior and the built environment is reflected very clearly in *global warming*, increases in average temperatures resulting from human activities, and *climate change*, changes in climate (e.g., storms, floods, droughts, desertification) resulting from global warming. On the one hand scientific evidence clearly shows that human behavior is a major factor causing global warming,[26] and on the other hand climate change (induced by global warming) is detrimentally impacting human health and other areas of behavior.[27] Clearly, psychological science can help bring about the changes that must be made in human behavior in order to control global warming (e.g., keeping average temperature increases to no more than 1.5°C–2.0°C) and mitigate the detrimental results of climate change.[28] But even in this task, on which the

survival of humanity depends, it has proven to be extraordinarily challenging to influence human behavior in the required direction.

Our limitations in understanding and effectively resolving this environmental challenge arise in large part because of the extensive influence of the rational choice model of human behavior and the associated reductionism that dominates mainstream economics and has considerable influence on behavioral sciences generally.[29] Rational choice theory assumes that individuals make rational choices intended to maximize rewards for the self; Robert Aumann puts it this way: "The rationality hypothesis – that people act to promote their interests – underlies most of economic theory and indeed economics as a whole."[30] Not only is behavior assumed to be rational but it is also assumed that a reductionist focus on individuals best explains collective behavior, as John Scott explains: "The methodological individualism of rational choice theorists leads them to start out from the actions of individuals and to see all other social phenomena as reducible to these individual actions."[31] This reductionist interpretation of behavior fails to take into account an important lesson from Gestalt psychology, *the whole is more than the sum of its parts*.

Unfortunately, reductionism, a key feature of rational choice theory, is also an important characteristic of mainstream psychology in the twenty-first century.[32] The tendency toward reductionism was strong in psychology when it was dominated by behaviorism for much of the twentieth century, and this tendency has been reinforced through the rise of neuroscience and cognitive neuroscience. Critics have pointed out that neuroscience research and interpretations of behavior tend to fall into the trap of the *mereological fallacy*, attributing the properties of wholes to parts.[33] Bits of the brain and particular neural networks are identified as being the 'causes' of behaviors that are more appropriately explained by reference to whole persons.

Since the late twentieth century a number of research movements have developed that have taken mainstream psychology some distance away from reductionism and rational choice theory. One such movement that gained momentum in the 1990s comes under the title of bounded rationality,[34] focusing particularly on how in practice human beings do not make rational decisions. This is because, for example, of limitations both in the information humans have and in their cognitive capacities (which means they are not able to make calculations rapidly and accurately enough to maximize self-interest, even if we assume this to be their goal). Research under the umbrella of embodied cognition,[35] the idea that important features of cognition are experienced not just by a part of the brain but by

the whole human body (discussed in Chapter 2 of this book), represents another promising research movement that influenced psychologists to move beyond reductionism and rational choice theory. For example, when Mary's father passes away, it is not a part of Mary's brain that feels deeply sad but Mary as a whole person.

Another research trend that helped move psychological science away from rational choice theory is focused on implicit cognition, thinking processes (to do with memory, perception, knowledge, etc.) that remain outside conscious awareness. The roots of research on implicit cognition go back to the early twentieth century, when animal research pioneered by Edward Tolman (1886–1959) provided demonstrations of *latent learning*, learning that takes place without being immediately manifest in behavior.[36] Latent learning and implicit cognition point to ways in which human cognitive processes lead to decision-making without the decision-makers being aware of important bits of information and various factors shaping their decisions. In other words, decision-making takes place without perfect knowledge and awareness.

Research by Daniel Kahneman, Amos Tversky (1937–1996), and others has shown that although decision-making under uncertainty has many limitations, the different features of our cognitive system that contribute to decision-making have evolved to serve particular survival functions.[37] That is, our decision-making is in some respects faulty, but its faults serve a useful purpose in survival. Throughout our evolutionary history, there have been times when we human beings have had to make rapid decisions on the basis of poor information. For example, imagine being in an isolated location, seeing a large stranger from 50 meters away, and quickly having to decide if the stranger is trustworthy. Should you keep walking toward the stranger or run the other way? To make quick decisions in such situations, we use *heuristics*, mental shortcuts, on the basis of limited information, such as the facial characteristics of the stranger. Over our evolutionary history we learned to make rapid judgements of the trustworthiness of faces and we are still influenced by these heuristic abilities.[38] For example, on the basis of split-second exposure to a face, we come to conclusions about how much we trust the face – which might well belong to a politician we decide to vote for.

What Kahneman termed System 1 thinking, involving split-second decision-making, has served us well in our evolutionary history.[39] Of course, System 1 thinking is generally not as accurate as System 2 thinking, which involves more engaged, deeper, knowledge-based cognition. System 2 thinking is closer to rational choice theory, but it is still very far from

the unbiased 'cold' model of the thinker that is at the heart of rational choice theory. Indeed, the research in the broad domain of motivated cognition demonstrates that people do not think, reason, and problem-solve in a neutral, unbiased manner. Rather, they have a vested interest in the outcome, and this vested interest is from the start influencing how they think and problem-solve. For example, when people look for information and solutions to societal problems, political party affiliation often influences them to already have preferences for certain types of information and solutions.[40]

Thus, humans do not engage in problem-solving in areas such as global warming and climate change as rational, unbiased thinkers. Rather, both in creating global warming and in tackling global warming, we are highly biased in our thinking and actions. The result is that there is strong continuity in the slow pace at which we are able (or not) to solve such enormous problems as global warming and nuclear disarmament.

Working within Our Limitations

Global warming is perhaps the most important example of how we influence the built environment, how the built environment in turn transforms our behavior, and how these symbiotic processes are extremely slow to change. In order to make progress in dealing with global warming and other enormously large and complex problems (such as nuclear disarmament), we need to acknowledge and work within our psychological limitations.

We are not rational creatures, and our behavior is strongly influenced by our irrationality (this argument is valid irrespective of whether we conceptualize irrationality more in the cognitive sense of implicit processes influencing us or according to the psychodynamic concept of irrationality through repression and the Freudian unconscious). For example, collectively we have been unable to recognize the dire danger posed by global warming, in part because of a mismatch we experience between the everyday experiences we have of temperature changes and the temperature changes scientists tell us are involved in global warming. In our everyday lives, we can personally experience temperature changes of 10, 20 or even 30 degrees centigrade over the course of months, weeks, or even days. On the other hand, scientists tell us that we must limit average temperature change to less than 2 degrees centigrade over the next fifty years. This seems like such a small change, relative to the temperature changes we experience in our daily lives. At a deep level we find it difficult to accept

that such small changes are catastrophic, when we experience much larger changes in our daily lives without problems.

Other limitations are associated with the politicization of global warming. On the one hand, scientific research is pointing to the detrimental impact of global warming on biodiversity generally and human health specifically.[41] On the other hand, thinking about global warming and conceptualizing this as a 'dire problem' that has to be solved immediately have become politically interpreted. In line with a general tendency for politically right-wing individuals to believe in *conspiracy theories*,[42] beliefs that powerful secret organizations are responsible for events and outcomes, interpretations of global warming as 'fake news' are more strongly endorsed by politically right-wing people.[43] (Of course, politically left-leaning individuals also hold conspiracy theories, but these are different from those held by politically right-wing individuals and they tend to be less strongly endorsed.[44])

Right-wing interpretations depict global warming as part of the natural cyclical changes that have taken place throughout the history of planet Earth, rather than as caused by human activities in recent history. As such, the free market is presented as the best solution to deal with the consequences of global warming. Although global warming is disproportionally burdening the poor,[45] and increases in violence and aggression as a result of global warming will leave the poor even more defenseless,[46] politically right-wing individuals reject the argument that there must be more government interventions to protect the poor. The continued influence of right-wing arguments in politics means that global warming will continue to increase, as will its detrimental impact on the poor, sustaining the rich–poor divide.

Concluding Comment

The impact of the built environment on human behavior is an important source of continuity: The built environment generally changes slowly (some symbolically important parts of the built environment survive hundreds and even thousands of years), influencing slow change in human behavior. Global warming is leading to dramatic changes in our environments, but in some important respects these changes are bringing about 'more of the same.' For example, the detrimental impact of global warming falls disproportionally on the poor, and this sustains and extends the rich–poor divide.

In some parts of the world, urban centers are expanding very rapidly. For example, in Chinese cities such as Suqian, Suzhou, and Putian, entire

neighborhoods are being built almost overnight to house additional residents. We might assume that such rapid changes in the built environment would influence rapid behavioral changes. But these rapid urban developments are being shaped by traditional Chinese architectural forms and elements,[47] so continuity is an essential ingredient of the planning and architecture being undertaken. No doubt this trend is influenced by the priority given to certain structural and hierarchical continuities by the Chinese leadership.

PART II

Change Agents, in Theory and Practice

CHAPTER 8

Revolutions and Political Plasticity

Revolutions are attempts to overthrow the political and social order,[1] and when they succeed in this goal one might assume that major changes in different areas of behavior must follow. This assumption is generally correct with respect to political and economic processes, because revolutions involve shifts in political and economic power, as governments are toppled and some groups lose power and new governments are formed and new groups gain power. This assumption is also generally correct with respect to a great deal of at least surface-level cultural and social life, which are forcibly changed through power and ideology changes after revolutions. For example, after the 1917 revolution in Russia, much of the cultural and social life changed (at least outwardly) in order to conform to the new communist ideology and the new communist values that had become dominant in Russia. Another example is how (at least surface-level) cultural and social life changed to become more Islamic in Iran, after the 1979 anti-shah revolution.

But at the heart of studies on revolutions, there continues to be a giant puzzle: Why do so many revolutions fail to bring about foundational change? Why is there often a circularity in societies experiencing revolutions, so that among many people there is a strong sense of 'the more things change, the more they stay the same' that at a deep level life really has not changed? I argue that this question can be adequately answered only by including psychologists in the study of revolutions, so psychological insights can be added to those of political scientists, sociologists, economists, and researchers from the other disciplines who have traditionally studied revolutions. But, unfortunately, so far there has been scant psychological research on revolutions.[2] In this discussion I use a psychological lens to reveal that revolutions run up against the enormous challenge of political plasticity in behavior, and revolutionaries generally fail to change behavior in the necessary ways toward their ideals because of limitations on political plasticity.

At the heart of every revolution there is a contradiction: In order to achieve a revolution, the revolutionaries must give priority to grabbing and dominating political power. However, revolutionaries soon discover that political power, or even the ability to control economic resources, does not result in changes in behavior necessary for the achievement of their revolutionary goals. Ultimately, political and economic power are necessary *but not sufficient* in order to reach the goals of the revolution, which also require changes in the psychological characteristics of the population. It is in working to change the psychological characteristics of the population that revolutions succeed or fail, and they almost always fail.

We can bring this challenge of behavioral change into sharp focus by considering the ideal societies put forward by seminal thinkers, such as Plato (428–348 BCE) in his *Republic*,[3] Thomas More (1478–1535) in *Utopia*,[4] and Karl Marx (1818–1883) in his writings on the classless society.[5] The characteristics of these ideal societies, which only exist on paper, could be achieved only through foundational behavioral change. For example, consider Plato's argument that philosopher kings should be rulers and they should have wisdom but *not be motivated by power*. This is an ideal far removed from the personalities of contemporary rulers, who are characterized by a high need for power. Obviously, a great deal would have to change in the characteristics of rulers in order to achieve Plato's ideal. Similarly, consider the absence of private property in ideal societies depicted by both Thomas More and Karl Marx. The behavior of populations would need to change in fundamental ways in order for society to function without private property. For example, people would have to be motivated to work hard not for personal gain but for collective rewards – exactly what did *not happen* in the collective farms and factories of the (now disbanded) Soviet Union. I argue that although such changes are not in theory impossible, in practice they are limited by political plasticity – and it is in relation to political plasticity that we can better understand the limitations and possibilities of revolutionary change.

Types of Revolutions and Change

From a psychological perspective, we must pay very close attention to the differences between two different types of revolutions. The vast majority of revolutions are *Type 1 revolutions*, which involve *within-system change*; when a government is toppled, a new ideology is established by the new ruling elite, and there is change in (at least some of) the groups who wield power and in (at least some of) the groups who own major resources. The

cultural and social trappings of life are transformed, but there is no change in the deeper nature of how society is ruled. For example, Iran experienced Type 1 revolution in 1979, when the dictator shah's government was toppled, a new Islamic ideology replaced the old monarchist ideology, new groups such as the Islamic Republican Guards gained political power and economic resources, and the surface characteristics of cultural and social life changed (e.g., women were forced to wear the hejab and prohibited from singing in public), but dictatorial rule by a single male strongman continued (a strongman ayatollah replaced the shah). The new (supposedly revolutionary) constitution of Iran enshrines this continuity of dictatorial rule through the principle of *velayat-e-faghih*, rule by a supreme leader who must be a male and is the ultimate interpreter of Islamic law, the final decider on *everything* in Iranian society.

Type 2 revolutions involve *between-system change*. For example, a dictatorship is defeated and a democracy is established through a revolution. However, this kind of between-system change is rare in history; the more usual change is within-system, as when a dictatorship is brought crashing down by a revolution, only to be succeeded by a dictatorship with a new front. But there are instances of between-system change that involve backward movement, from a more to a less open society – such as the Roman Republic returning to dictatorship or, as at the start of the twenty-first century, societies such as Turkey and Venezuela moving from more to less openness.

In social and political science discussions of revolutions,[6] there has traditionally been a distinction between the great revolutions, such as the French Revolution (1789) and American Revolution (1776), and the lesser revolutions, such as the Mexican Revolution (1910), the Cuban Revolution (1959), and the Arab Spring revolutions (2010–2012). But this distinction does not stand up to scrutiny when we apply the distinction between Type 1 and Type 2 revolutions; the so-called great revolutions fall into the general category of Type 1 rather than Type 2 revolutions. For example, the French revolution resulted in the French king and the traditional aristocracy being swept away, but they were replaced by a new emperor (Napoleon), who gave royal titles to his own family and helped to create a new aristocracy.[7] Napoleonic rule continued the tradition of strongman leadership and was immediately followed by a return to monarchy. Clearly, this was not a Type 2 revolution, in the sense that leadership style remained the same. However, it could be claimed that the American Revolution was Type 2, because there was transition from a hereditary king to an elected president. But we must be careful not to

rush to this judgement, because George Washington (1732–1799), the first president of the United States, was put into power by a small group of white men. In the presidential elections that followed the original constitution, the electorate did not include women or slaves; in most states, only free white men who owned property or paid taxes could vote. It took well over another two centuries before women and minorities were allowed to vote in US presidential elections.

Psychological Stages of Revolutions

Psychology is at the heart of revolutions, as reflected in the centrality of psychological processes in the five major stages of collective mobilization that result in revolutions. The first stage involves intense feelings of relative deprivation and a strong sense of collective violated rights, together with a belief that a much better alternative society is possible in practice. Stage two involves mass mobilization, guided by a talented and well-organized counter-elite, absolutely determined to topple the old elite and grab power. During stage three, following the toppling of the old regime and the coming to power of the new regime, the revolutionaries shift their focus from the rights to the duties of the people and from higher social comparison targets to lower social comparison targets. During stage four, the ideals and actions of revolutionaries become constrained by political plasticity. In the final stage (five), as political plasticity exerts limitations on societal change toward the ideal society envisaged by the revolutionaries, the gap increases between revolutionary ideals and actual practices. There has been extensive psychological research relevant to the first three stages of revolutions (as discussed here) but scant research on the stages concerned with limitations imposed by political plasticity (stages four and five).

Stage 1. *Relative Deprivation and the Identification of Possible Alternative Societies*

The basic idea that people must feel relatively deprived in order to take collective action directly or indirectly underlies the major psychological theories of collective action, including the *social identity model of collective action* (SIMCA),[8] the *elaborated social identity model* (ESIM),[9] the *politicized collective identity model*,[10] and the *disidentification, innovation, moralisation and energisation* (*DIME) model*, which contrasts conventional and radical forms of collective action.[11] Most of the research also points to the idea that people are more likely to engage in collective

action when they feel fraternal (group) rather than egoistical (individual) relative deprivation. For example, Jane is more likely to participate in collective action when she feels that women as a group are being discriminated against, rather than just herself as an individual woman.[12] In order to join collective action, Jane has to feel that only by improving the situation of women as a group can she improve her personal situation. If she experiences only egoistical (and not fraternal) relative deprivation, she is more likely to attempt to improve her personal situation through individual social mobility or some other individualistic strategy.[13] As part of a strategy to mobilize people into collective action against the government, the counter-elite put a spotlight on the much better alternative societies that can be achieved and that people deserve and have a right to have.

Stage 2. *Collective Mobilization Led by Rights-Focused Counter-Elite, with Attributions Focused on the Ruling Elite*

The narratives of the counter-elite during the collective mobilization of the masses focus on the deprivation of *collective rights*, what the people are owed – what they are deprived of but deserve to have. 'You people have a right to X, Y, Z …' is at the heart of the counter-elite narratives. A second component of counter-elite narratives at this stage of mass mobilization is causal attributions that point directly at the ruling elite as the reason why the people do not have what they deserve, why their collective rights (to freedom, free health care and education, better housing, e.g.) have been denied. The cause of people being denied their collective rights is not their fate, or their lack of hard work, or limited talent, or anything other than the greed, incompetence, and other detrimental characteristics of the current ruling elite. If it were not for the ruling elite, the people would be able to enjoy life in a much better society, which they so justly deserve.

Stage 3. *Shift from Rights to Duties, from Higher to Lower Social Comparison Targets*

After the revolution takes place and the ruling elite is replaced by the counter-elite, two changes take place immediately. First, there is a shift in the narratives of the new elite from the rights to duties, from what people are owed to what people owe others, and in particular the duty to obey the law and the authorities. Second, the narratives of the new elite shift focus from encouraging people to compare themselves with much better off comparison targets (e.g., 'You deserve to have a much better standard of living, you have the right to far better health care, education, housing, and social services …') to far lower comparison targets (e.g., 'The world is

full of starving people who suffer all kinds of injustices. You are fortunate to live in this revolutionary society.'). People who were encouraged to feel deprived and to aspire to a much better life are now guided to feel satisfied and grateful. The goal of the new elite is to achieve stability in society, after the turmoil and radical change of the revolution.

Stage 4. *Revolutionary Ideals and Actions Constrained by Political Plasticity* Of course, after the revolution the revolutionaries are not satisfied with only achieving stability, they are also motivated to change society toward their revolutionary ideals, such as communist ideals in Russia after 1917 and Islamic ideals in Iran after 1979. Achieving such revolutionary ideals requires radical changes to move individual and collective behavior from what it was before the revolution to reach the ideals espoused by the revolutionaries. For example, in the build-up to the 1979 revolution, Islamic fundamentalists led by Khomeini attacked the shah's regime as corrupt and as denying Iranians political rights and civil liberties. One might assume that when Khomeini and his followers came to power after 1979, they would change Iranian society to be in line with their revolutionary ideals. But judged by international standards Iran after the revolution remains a highly corrupt society,[14] ranked by Transparency International as low as 149 out of 180 countries in being free of corruption.[15] Similarly, the 1979 anti-shah revolution was supposed to bring political rights and civil liberties to Iranians, but in practice this is far from the case: Freedom House gives Iran a total score of only 16 out of 100 for human rights and civil liberties (Sweden and Norway achieve a score of 100 out of 100, and the United States and the United Kingdom score 83 and 93 respectively).[16] Thus, if we accept as sincere the espoused goals of Islamic revolutionaries in Iran, behavioral change has not taken place toward the ideal Islamic society in areas such as corruption, human rights, and civil liberties. One reason is limitations on political plasticity.

A more direct test of constraints imposed by political plasticity is found in Russia during the post-1917 era. This is because the revolutionaries in Russia were directly focused on changing behavior toward their communist ideals. In attempting to achieve the goal of changing behavior, the Soviet communists adopted the best scientific tools available, even if those tools had to be adopted from their capitalist enemies. For example, the Soviet communists attempted to apply psychological science to reach their goals, being aware of the role of psychology in bringing about behavioral changes. This is particularly clear in the writings of Leon Trotsky (1879–1940):

> To produce a new, "improved version" of man – that is the future task of communism. And for that we first have to find out everything about man, his anatomy, his physiology and that part of his physiology which is called his psychology.[17]

The Soviet communists turned to two schools of thought from Capitalist America to shape the "new, improved version" of humans that would make successful their ideal socialist society. The first school of thought is behaviorism, which came to dominate American and Western psychology for the first half of the twentieth century and still has indirect impact on mainstream psychological thinking in the twenty-first century.[18] Although behaviorism developed to acquire peculiarly American characteristics, it was influenced by the pioneering research of three Russians: Ivan Sechenov (1829–1905), Vladimir Bekhterev (1857–1927), and Ivan Pavlov (1849–1927). Pavlov won the Nobel Prize in physiology in 1904 and was a world-renowned scientist by the time of the 1917 Russian revolution. His research on classical conditioning is foundational in behaviorism. Pavlov's scientific importance was such that even though he was not an enthusiastic supporter of the communists, he was granted special privileges and his research was supported by the Soviet government.[19] But because Pavlov's research was so central to behaviorism, in turning to American behaviorism the Soviet communists were also turning to researchers in their own society.

The Soviet communists shared a number of beliefs with the radical behaviorists, led by John B. Watson (1878–1958) in the United States.[20] Most importantly, they shared the belief that human behavior is shaped by environmental conditions, and humans can be molded through environmental engineering. Both the Soviet communists and the behaviorists rejected the idea that human characteristics are in important ways pre-programmed (as a Kantian perspective would have it) and people behave in particular ways because of inherited characteristics. But in order for psychologists to contribute to the Soviet effort to change behavior, the right kinds of psychologists would need to get to work. The old style Wundtian psychologists who used introspection to examine consciousness were excluded,[21] and according to Trotsky, conditions were created for the development of the new behaviorist psychology in line with the goals of the revolution: "Socialism does not aim at creating a socialist psychology as a pre-requisite to socialism but at creating socialist conditions of life as a pre-requisite to socialist psychology."[22]

In the next main section, I examine the failure of the Soviet communists to change behavior using the new psychology.

There was a second school of thought that the Soviet communists borrowed from Capitalist America in order to shape the "new, improved version" of humans that would bring to life their ideal socialist society, and this was Taylorism, the organization of work according to the ideas of the American industrial engineer Frederick Taylor (1856–1915).[23] The essence of Taylorism is the deskilling of workers, by designing jobs to be as simple as possible, so that there is minimum investment in each worker and workers can easily replace one another.[24] Lenin and other Soviet leaders found the (supposed) scientific nature of Taylorism highly appealing.[25] In the new Soviet society, through Taylorism humans and machines would merge into one to achieve maximum efficiency.[26] Taylorism was seen a successful foundation for mass production in the Ford Motor Company and other manufacturing companies in the United States, and the Soviet communists assumed this scientific approach to work organization would also enable the efficient reorganization of work in the Soviet Union. However, rather than the private ownership and the individual incentives that were the norm in capitalist United States, in the Soviet communist system the citizens would be motivated by collective ownership and collective incentives.

Thus, in the immediate postrevolution period, Soviet communists set to work changing the behavior of Soviet citizens using behaviorist psychology and Taylorism.

Stage 5. *Growing Gap between Original Revolutionary Ideals and Actual Practices*

A common theme for almost all revolutions is that in the postrevolution era, behavioral changes are extremely slow, and take place minimally, in the direction of the ideal society envisaged by the revolutionaries. Of course, the regimes in power in the postrevolution era are primarily focused on retaining power, and their propaganda extolls the virtues of their revolutionary society. Thus, the Soviet Union after 1917, China after 1949, Cuba after 1959, Iran after 1979 – in all postrevolution societies the governments invest heavily in propaganda, fabricating the great advances made in their postrevolution societies. However, in practice revolutions fail to change behavior in the direction and to the extent desired by revolutionaries, illustrating the limits imposed by political plasticity. In the next section, I examine in greater detail the impact of political plasticity in specific areas of behavior in postrevolution societies.

For now, my focus is on the gap that typically develops between the ideals originally espoused by revolutionaries and the actual practices in the

postrevolution era. This gap typically evolves to become enormous and shocking, so that the rhetoric and propaganda of the postrevolution government drift further and further apart from actual practices on the ground. The outcome is two very different pictures of reality: first, the picture painted by the words of the revolutionary government and, second, the picture comprised of the practices of everyday life in the 'revolutionary' society. Thus, for example, in communist China the rhetoric around ideals espoused by Marx and Mao continues (extolling collective ownership and collectivization generally), whereas in practice private wealth concentration and the rise of fabulously rich individuals and families are the realities on the ground.[27] Similarly, whereas the revolutionary regime in Iran has propagated humane values and lofty virtues, in practice torture (including the rape of political prisoners) and repression are routinely practiced by the regime.[28] We can add to this list the tragic gap that existed in the United States after the American Revolution, between the lofty rhetoric of the US Constitution (1787) and the Bill of Rights (1791) *and* the reality of slavery and the exclusion of women and minorities from voting and other political rights.

Whereas in the United States political and legal reforms over the past few centuries have decreased the gap between government rhetoric on freedoms and equality and actual practices, in dictatorships such as China, Russia, Cuba, and Iran, the gap has actually grown. The outcome of this growing gap between the picture fabricated by the 'revolutionary' regimes and events on the ground is that the regimes could retain their power monopoly only through extreme repression.

Political Plasticity and Behavior Change after Revolutions: The Example of Collectivization

Political plasticity imposes limits on the behavioral changes that can be brought about through revolutions. To clarify this point, it is useful to return to the distinction between *surface behavior* and *deep behavior* (discussed in Chapter 1). Surface behavior concerns how things look, including public images and symbols. It does not involve deep cognition and sacred values, but it does involve conformity and obedience simply at the level of action – changing what we do without changing internal beliefs, convictions, and allegiances. For example, a woman being forced to wear the hejab in post-1979 Iran (i.e., conforming in her outward action to what the regime demands) but remaining convinced that women should be free to decide for themselves how they dress. Deep behavior involves values, motivations, allegiances, and the core psychological makeup of

identity. These have been far more resilient to change than surface behavior, as illustrated by the case of collectivization in the Soviet Union after the 1917 revolution.

Collectivization in the Soviet Union

Perhaps the most important behavioral change attempted by the Soviet communists was collectivization, which involved two foundational types of change. First, the move from private to collective ownership of *the means of production*, including in all industries, farming, mining, and so on, as well as all forms of housing and transportation, and wealth in general. Second, the move from individual to collective incentives, so that people would receive rewards (wages, bonuses, etc.) as part of a group on the basic of group performance rather than as an individual on the basis of individual performance. The Soviet collectivization experience has been researched extensively,[29] and here I limit the discussion to, first, psychological research related to collectivization; second, the means through which behavior change toward collectivization was attempted; and, third, the general outcomes of the Soviet collectivization programs.

At the heart of the difference between capitalism and communism are different assumptions about human motivation. In capitalism, the assumption is that people are best motivated to work harder and better by offering them individual incentives, so the harder and better they work the more individual rewards they receive. In line with this, capitalism is based on private ownership, so that the harder individuals work, the more they are personally rewarded and the more private property they can accumulate. In this way, private property and individual incentives have been at the heart of capitalism. Implicit in this capitalist perspective is the assumption that individual motivation in response to individual incentives are natural, in the sense that individuals are born to work harder when they personally receive rewards for their individual efforts (of course, inherited wealth complicates the picture, because it means that some individuals can become extremely wealthy without ever working). According to this perspective, when property and incentives are collectivized, this goes against the (supposed) natural inclination of human beings.

The communist perspective is that human motivation is shaped by environmental conditions, and people in capitalist societies are socialized to be motivated by individual incentives and the desire to accumulate private wealth. In this respect, the Soviet communists agreed with behaviorists, who argued that human behavior is not inborn but shaped through environmental

engineering. People can be shaped to be motivated by collective rewards and collective ownership. This leads to a rethinking of the results of research on *social loafing*, the tendency for people to work less hard in a group than when they work by themselves. It is incorrect to conclude that this social loafing research demonstrates a 'natural' human tendency to be more strongly motivated by individual than collective incentives. First, people who have been socialized in more collectivist cultures do not show this social loafing tendency.[30] Second, even in capitalist societies under some conditions people work harder in response to group rather than individual incentives.[31]

There is, then, an argument in support of the claim that people can be socialized to engage in *social laboring*, that is, increased effort in response to collective incentives. A clear example of this in the context of Western capitalist societies is in sports, when team effort is essential. For example, consider a team of eight rowers, competing against other rowing teams. The teams are competing for group prizes. Individuals within teams could engage in social loafing – after all, when individuals work harder, the reward goes to the entire team and not only to themselves personally. The members of a rowing crew are not able to stand out for their individual efforts but must act in harmony with the other crew members. Despite this, being a team member motivates individuals to work even harder, and social laboring rather than social loafing takes place on competitive rowing teams. Conditions can also be created for social laboring rather than social loafing to be achieved in work contexts.[32]

The Soviet communists adopted a number of strategies to achieve collectivization. If this was successfully achieved, then collective ownership and collective incentives would lead to social laboring and not social loafing. Education was a major tool for collectivization; in the Soviet Union private education was prohibited and educational institutions were all controlled by the state. The Soviet education system was strongly influenced by a number of educators, particularly Anton Makarenko (1888–1939),[33] who developed educational practices to socialize the new communist citizen. Jonathan Tudge has explained Makarenko's approach in this way:

> He believed that education was not a passive medium within which children could develop "as nature intended" but was a means to an end – a communist end. His methods were based on the primacy of collective thought and action. Everything was done with the collective in mind; individual activity, as such, was accorded little importance, and children were discouraged from engaging in "acollective" activities. He organized his colonies of youth in a semi-militaristic fashion … with the emphasis on working together as a team.[34]

In addition to education, the Soviet communists relied heavily on the built environment to reshape the behaviors of Soviet citizens. Recent research has confirmed the powerful impact of the built environment on human behavior,[35] so the Soviet communists were correct in assuming that by changing the built environment they would change behavior. But in their experiments on environmental manipulation for behavioral change,[36] the Soviet communists had more success in waging a war on privilege than in achieving specific behavioral changes toward their revolutionary ideals.

The war on privilege was waged relentlessly by the Soviet communists by collectivizing housing and reorganizing where people lived and how they used space. First, the grand palaces that belonged to the former aristocracy now belonged to the people, and sometimes hundreds of families were given living space to share in a palace that formerly belonged to one family. Second, living spaces in houses and apartments were organized around collective living, with shared kitchens and other common spaces, and minimum space allocated as private. There was strong encouragement of shared activities, such as cooking and childcare, in common spaces. The idea was that shared activities in collectives, with minimum private space for individual seclusion, would transform the family, as well as behaviors associated with privacy and individualism. The individual would become subsidiary to, and immersed in, the collective.[37]

The Soviet communists also embarked on an extensive campaign to change and/or destroy symbols, images, names, and just about every feature of the built environment that could be changed.[38] They recognized the emotional power of *cultural carriers*, the means by which values, norms, identities, and other aspects of culture are propagated.[39] Trotsky and other communists recognized the need not only to destroy the prerevolution cultural carriers, such as those used by the church to propagate allegiance to the Tsar and his regime, but also to manufacture new revolutionary cultural carriers that would forge emotional and identity links between the people and the Soviet regime.[40] An example of the postrevolution cultural carriers is Lenin's Mausoleum, built in 1924 and situated in Red Square, Moscow (discussed in Chapter 2 of this book). This Mausoleum served as a powerful public remembrance of the great revolutionary and his ideology even after the collapse of the Soviet Union.[41]

The harsh war on privilege waged by the Soviet communists was successful in that the traditional aristocracy and class system were largely overturned. However, among the negative consequences were extreme political repression and a terrifying atmosphere of neighbors, friends, and family members informing on, and sometimes fabricating stories about,

neighbors, friends, and family members.[42] In addition to a terrible atmosphere of repression (an experience that is common to dictatorships and one that I suffered through in postrevolution Iran under the yoke of the mullahs), the communist war on privilege had at least two other detrimental consequences. First, although the prerevolution system of privileges and elite power and wealth concentration collapsed, a new postrevolution system of privileges arose, with a new Soviet elite that enjoyed relatively greater power and wealth.[43] Second, although in some respects (at least surface-level) behaviors did change after 1917, such behavioral changes did not result in the success of collectivization programs.

Was Soviet collectivization a failure? To what extent did Soviet collectivization contribute to the final collapse of the Soviet Union? Different answers can be given to these questions.[44] In defense of Soviet collectivization, one could argue that the problems that arose (such as widespread famine costing millions of lives in 1932–1933) were a result of poor management and implementation rather than proof that collectivization is not viable. The basic theory of collectivization, it could be argued, is valid, but it was not implemented correctly in the Soviet Union. A related argument is that in order to be implemented correctly, collectivization needs more time. That is, people have to have enough time and opportunity to change their behaviors, specifically their motivations and reactions to collective incentives, so that in time they learn to be incentivized by collective rewards and collective ownership. With better management and more time, the Soviet people would have been socialized to behave in the appropriate and necessary ways in order to make collectivization a success. This standard defense brings us back to plasticity and how quickly, and by how much, human behavior can be changed.

The standard defense is basically arguing that the behavioral changes necessary in order to ensure collectivization takes place successfully need much more time to come about. Political plasticity in this domain is very limited. The shift is extremely slow from people being motivated by incentives for individual effort to being motivated by incentives for collective effort, and from being motivated by private ownership to being motivated by collective ownership. From this perspective, if there had been more time, collectivization in the Soviet Union would have succeeded.

Critics of collectivization argue that Soviet collectivization failed not because of a lack of time but because human beings are by nature motivated far more effectively by individual rather than collective incentives. Although in capitalist societies individual incentives operate in contexts where team/organizational performance is of the highest importance,[45] the

norm of private rather than collective ownership ensures that individual effort and rewards, rather than collective effort and collective rewards, remain the higher priority and line up with 'natural' human tendencies. Extensive empirical research supports the powerful impact of individual incentives on performance.[46] But in a review of 106 empirical articles on collective performance for pay, Anthony Nyberg and his colleagues showed there is also empirical support for the view that even in capitalist societies,[47] under certain conditions collective pay for performance is also effective. Consequently, the empirical evidence suggests that although individual incentives are very powerful, there are conditions in which collective incentives can also have influence.

Collectivization is an important example of how revolutionaries in the Soviet Union, communist China, Cuba, and a number of other countries attempted to bring about rapid changes in behavior toward their revolutionary goals but were thwarted by limited political plasticity.

Concluding Comment

Revolutions are the means by which power is transferred from one group of people to another. As part of their strategy to gain support and come to power, revolutionaries make promises and put forward ideals, such as a society that is just and fair, meritocratic, or even classless. But bringing about such ideals requires deep-level behavioral changes, and this is not possible, at least not in the short term (i.e., in a few years, or decades, and in some cases even centuries). Besides, in terms of personality characteristics the kinds of individuals who rise to power after revolutions tend to be motivated by a strong desire for domination, wealth, and status. These individuals are driven to become the new elite and are the least likely to lead the revolution to a society based on justice and equality. Progress in human societies is more commonly achieved through a little change in a time of change, rather than through violent revolutions.

CHAPTER 9

War as Transformative

In September 1980 I was researching and teaching in Iran when Saddam Hussein's Iraqi military invaded Iran from the west of the country. This was just one year after the tumultuous 1979 Iranian Revolution, which had driven the last shah of Iran and his family into exile, where he died (July 1980). A great deal had happened over the previous year, since the collapse of the shah's regime. Ayatollah Khomeini (1902–1989) had returned to Iran (in February 1979) and positioned himself as the leader of the revolution, and he was soon to gain absolute power and take over as the new dictator. One of the tactics Khomeini used to become absolute dictator was to support and encourage the extremists who invaded the US Embassy in Tehran and took fifty-two US diplomats as hostages (this is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 12). The taking of US diplomats as hostages further added to the deep turmoil and confusion in Iran, and this created opportunities for Khomeini to attack, imprison, or kill his critics as American collaborators. Another tactic was to launch the so-called cultural revolution (copied from Mao Zedong's, 1893–1976, cultural revolution) and close all universities in Iran in May 1980, because the universities had become centers of opposition to Khomeini's plans to reestablish a dictatorship, this time with an Islamic front.[1] Consequently, Saddam Hussein had timed his military invasion of Iran to coincide with maximum turmoil in the country.

But Saddam Hussein had miscalculated, because he neglected an important principle in intergroup dynamics: External threat to a group leads to internal cohesion of group members and support for strong centralized leadership. At the time that Saddam Hussein launched his invasion of Iran, the country was in postrevolution turmoil and disarray, the military and police had not recovered from devastating attacks on them during the revolution, and no political group, including Khomeini and his fanatical followers, had gained full control of Iranian society. At that time, women still enjoyed some level of political freedom, they were not forced to wear the Islamic hejab, and there was still strong but uncoordinated opposition

to Khomeini's push toward the establishment of an Islamic dictatorship. But the Iraqi invasion galvanized Iranian society to defend the nation and set off a series of events that are predictable on the basis of what we know about the psychology of group and intergroup dynamics.

First, all Iranian attention and resources became concentrated on fighting the Iraqi invaders. Iran and Iraq had been engaged in territorial disputes in the 1970s, competing to become the dominant power in the Persian Gulf region after the British withdrew in the 1960s. The invasion by Saddam Hussein's forces revived nationalistic feelings among Iranians and there was rapid collective mobilization, pulling together a wide array of secular and religious groups to fight the invaders. I witnessed local neighborhoods sending buses and trucks, loaded with men, food, and equipment, to rush to the war front and defend the country. Second, Khomeini and his extremist followers could now use the excuse of the war to attack all their political competitors as working for the enemy – the enemy they mobilized people against included Saddam Hussein, the Great Satan (the United States), and the Little Satan (Israel).

By the second year of the Iran–Iraq War (1982), it was clear that neither side could achieve a military victory. The two sides were at a standstill, killing each other without gaining ground. But Khomeini was finding the war to be extremely useful for achieving his political goals, so he was not at all in a hurry to sign a peace treaty (when he was finally forced to agree to peace in 1988, he described it as like taking poison). As a consequence, the war was prolonged for eight grim and bloody years, and during that time millions of people were killed or seriously injured, entire cities were destroyed, and Iranian society underwent huge transformations. The relatively benign Islamic politicians who had come to power immediately after the revolution (such as Mehdi Bazargan, 1907–1995, and Abolhassan Banisadre, 1933–2021) were pushed aside, to eventually make way for more aggressive and fanatical Islamic politicians (such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Ebrahim Raisi, known as the hanging-judge, because of the large numbers of killings he ordered). In addition to the radicalization of leadership, the war also gave unparalleled growth opportunities to the Republican Guards,[2] a fundamentalist Islamic fighting force that gradually came to dominate both domestic and foreign policy. The Republican Guards initially acted like Moa Zedong's Red Guards in China but have since far expanded their role to include ideological police, domestic security, economic and industrial enterprises, and overseas fighting force.[3] In this process, the leaders of the Republican Guards have become extremely rich and powerful.

My time in Iran during the Iran–Iraq War gave me firsthand experience of how (at least certain types of) war can foundationally transform society, an idea that goes back as far as Aristotle, and probably earlier.[4] Throughout this chapter, my focus is on *total war*, the mobilization of all resources for war and the unrestricted destruction of all civilian and military targets without regard for the rules of war. This is because in order to bring about the deep and massive changes I am discussing, war has to penetrate all of society – as does total war. For example, with respect to wealth and income and the leveling effect of war, Walter Scheidel argues:

> Only specific types of violence have consistently forced down inequality. Most wars did not have any systematic effect on the distribution of resources: although archaic forms of conflict that thrived on conquest and plunder were likely to enrich victorious elites and impoverish those on the losing side, less clear-cut endings failed to have predictable consequences. For war to level disparities in income and wealth, it needed to penetrate society as a whole, to mobilize people and resources on a scale that was often only feasible in modern nation-states. This explains why the two world wars were among the greatest levelers in history.[5]

Another way to understand the transformative power of war is to read accounts of life in a society before and after major wars. For example, reading Siegfried Sassoon's (1886–1967) novel *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* gives us a picture of life in pre–World War I England,[6] a world that was transformed by the (so-called) Great War (1914–1918). Sassoon was also one of the important poets of World War I,[7] and the poetry produced during this war illuminates how deeply people are transformed by war experiences. Hundreds of millions of people came out of World War I utterly changed, many of them deeply scarred.

Of course, the twenty-first-century electronic media provides us with an even harsher and real time understanding of the transformative power of war. As I research and write this book, like countless other people around the world, I am also anxiously following events in the Ukraine, after the barbaric decision of the dictator Vladimir Putin to order the invasion of Ukraine in March 2022. The cruel human and material destruction wreaked by Russian forces is forcibly changing Ukrainian society before our eyes. Ukrainian cities and infrastructure are being destroyed, the Ukrainian population of about forty-five million people is experiencing intense stress and pain, and millions of Ukrainians have become refugees. The total war waged by Putin is imposing horrific changes in Ukraine, as have similar total wars before.

The twentieth century witnessed two world wars, World War I (1914–1918) and World War II (1939–1945), which normalized total war.

Subsequent research highlighted the changes brought about by these wars, although there are differences in the interpretations that researchers have developed to explain how much societal change is brought about by wars.[8] Although the main focus in this research is on the destructive and negative impact of war, from the early twentieth century, there has also evolved research that considers some (mostly unpanned) positive consequences, depicting war as also indirectly or directly bringing about some constructive outcomes. An example of such constructive outcome is the supposed greater willingness of the elite (the super-rich, the aristocracy, the capitalists, or whatever other term we use to describe this ruling group) to make sacrifices and to have sympathy for the lower classes during wartime.

In the following section I discuss the impact of war on politics, brought about by psychological processes, such as increased pressures for people to conform and obey. Next, I consider changes brought about by war in the areas of social roles and social relations. Then, I focus on the impact of war on mental and societal health and the questions this raises about human rationality. Finally, I examine how war changes wealth distribution.

War, Psychological Processes, and Politics

The impact of war on politics is mediated by psychological processes, but it also depends to some extent on local circumstances. For example, the Iran–Iraq War transformed politics in Iran by enabling Khomeini and his fanatical followers to throttle all opposition and establish their complete monopoly of power and resources. Very importantly, the pressurized war conditions gave Khomeini the opportunity to put into practice his idea of absolute rule by a mullah, himself of course (this was enshrined as *Velayat-e-Faqih* in the Iranian Constitution, as discussed in Chapter 4 of this book). Khomeini was able to do this because of the heightened conformity and obedience brought about during the pressure-cooker war conditions.

Research since the early twentieth century has illuminated the powerful psychological forces that regulate *conformity*,[9] changes in behavior that arise from real or imagined group pressure, and *obedience*,[10] changes in behavior that arise when people follow the instructions of persons in authority. This research has established that ordinary people can be induced to conform to norms that are incorrect and arbitrary, even when they are aware that they are conforming to incorrect norms.[11] For example, participants in studies gave incorrect estimates of line lengths, even when they are aware they are giving the wrong answer.[12]

In everyday life, people often conform to norms that do not have an objective basis. For example, in the domain of sports, we conform to arbitrary norms such as 'soccer teams are allowed eleven players on the field at any one time' and 'basketball teams play with five players.' Why should soccer teams not have five players and basketball teams eleven players? Although there are no objective bases for these norms, and thousands of others (why should the sprint race in the Olympics be 100 meters and 200 meters, and not 40 meters and 80 meters?), we rigidly conform to the norms. Similarly, in the domain of obedience, research shows that ordinary people can be induced to follow instructions to inflict extreme harm to others and to justify their actions by explaining that they were 'just following orders, just doing a good job the way I was told to do.'[13]

But it is essential to keep in mind that in psychological research on conformity and obedience, not all the participants conform to norms and obey authority figures. There are *always* some participants who show nonconformist and disobedient behavior. For example, in Stanley Milgram's (1933–1984) seminal study on obedience to authority,[14] ordinary people were cast as teachers in a situation where they were ordered by a scientist in a white laboratory coat to give electric shocks to a learner (actually a confederate of the experimenter) each time the learner answered a question incorrectly. The learner initially gave correct answers but (acting according to Milgram's plan) after a number of trials gave incorrect answers to the teacher. The main research question was: Would the teacher (a role played by naïve participants who were screened to ensure they were normal in terms of personality characteristics) follow orders and administer high or even lethal levels of electric shock to the learner? When this research was conducted in the United States, about 65 percent of participants were fully obedient – they gave lethal levels of shock (actually, the learner was a professional actor who behaved as if he received shocks; no shocks were administered in this study, and Milgram took great care to minimize harm to participants). In cross-cultural replications of this study, the level of obedience varied, from about 40 percent to as high as 90 percent.[15] But in all the published studies, some participants (acting as teachers) disobeyed.

My research and everyday living experience in dictatorships line up with Milgram's findings; I have witnessed that even in harsh dictatorships some courageous people disobey the authorities. For example, even under the harshest conditions in Iran, some people continue to go against the commands of the ruling dictator (who was Khomeini after the revolution until his death in 1989, then Khamenei took over as the supreme leader). For example, when Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was declared the winner of the

rigged elections in 2009 and endorsed by the dictator Khamenei, massive demonstrations took place throughout Iran in what came to be called the Green Revolution.[16] The Green Revolution was crushed through violent repression, with many people killed and injured. Millions of Iranians dared to disobey and publicly reject Khamenei's directives, even though according to the principle of *Velayat-e-Faqih* enshrined in the Iranian Constitution (which supports dictatorship), as the supreme leader Khamenei had the constitutional right to decide the outcome of the election.

Nonconformity and disobedience in the face of harsh punishments give hope that even the most brutal dictatorships face opposition and will eventually collapse – as did the Soviet Union, for example. But in the fog of war, the consequences of actions and events are not always predicted. For example, during the turmoil of the civil war in Colombia, criminal and extremist armed groups took advantage of decentralization policies in the 1990s to gain control of local institutions at the level of municipalities.[17] In this way, the decentralization move that was supposed to strengthen democracy actually led to power falling into the hands of antidemocratic forces. In the context of the horrific civil war in Cambodia, the fog of war context enabled the enormously violent Khmer communist revolution in 1970–1974.[18] This revolution included massive relocation of populations, including the emptying of major cities to move people to live in rural regions and to organize their lives to be part of collectives, regulated harshly through terror, disappearances, and mass killings.

Although in most cases war creates conditions for the concentration of power and the rise of authoritarian strongmen, research suggests that in some cases democratic tendencies can also take root in war conditions. For example, the research of Reyko Huang shows that in some cases,[19] such as Mozambique, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Uganda, postwar changes toward democratization have wartime origins. This can arise when rebels depend heavily on civilian support to come to power in a country and in this way mobilize the population politically. Also, during the conflict rebels can develop decision-making processes and institutions that are inclusive, and this style of behavior can continue to the postwar society. Similar trends were found through research on involvement in wartime governance by armed groups in Angola, who showed a tendency to continue political involvement in peace time.[20] War can also bring about policy changes that prove beneficial in peace time. For example, World War I and World War II both resulted in stronger progressive taxation in the United States, and World War II brought the GI Bill of Rights, which funded higher education for two million returning veterans.[21]

War, Social Relations, Social Class, and Gender

War has a profound impact on social roles and social relations broadly,[22] although the exact nature of how war influences social class and gender roles depends to some degree on local circumstances. Part of the impact of war arises through the sheer size of mass mobilization and relocation. Total war typically results in millions of people forcibly relocating and even becoming refugees, often having to cross national borders. For example, as a result of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine (March 2022), about ten million Ukrainians have become refugees and there is enormous displacement of people all around the country and the rest of the world. With men doing most of the fighting, it is women and children who make up most of the refugee population. Families are torn apart and social relations change.

Because large numbers of men move to the war front, they leave many empty employment positions during wartime (the tradition has been for men to be more prominent at the warfront and women to take over jobs left by men). This creates opportunities for women to take up jobs that were formerly monopolized by men, jobs to which women could not gain access during peacetime. For example, in the first year that the United States entered World War II, about 60 percent of federal employees were women, and 40,000 female stenographers and typists joined the government workforce.

The pressure of war even creates opportunities for women to serve in the military and/or in direct support of the military. For example, the wars in Afghanistan (starting in 2001) and Iraq (starting in 2003) resulted in several hundred thousand US female service members being deployed overseas.[23] Thousands of these women were killed or seriously injured. The Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988) created opportunities for Iranian women to serve in battle, with the result that 6,420 women were killed on the battlefront.[24] This breaking out of traditional gender roles shows the power of war conditions, which in this instance forced changes opposite to the traditional gender roles demanded by the central authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. War also played a part in more Iranian women attending universities, so that by 1997–1998 60 percent of all university students in Iran were female (unfortunately, although women forced their way into universities by excelling in competitive examinations, they were still treated as third-class citizens after graduation).[25] Similarly, during World War II, men being away at war meant that 282,000 women in the United States now had the opportunity to be trained in engineering and science at universities, and numerous corporations funded technical training for women.[26]

Elisabeth Wood has explored six social processes that undergo changes during civil wars,[27] and two of these are highly relevant to our discussion of the impact of total wars on social relations, gender, and social class: transformation of gender roles and polarization of social identities. Wood believes that the most dramatic change comes about when women carry arms and become part of the fighting military force. Another change comes about when there are widespread sexual assaults against women during conflicts, and this experience traumatizes many women but also leads some to become active in political and human rights movements. Conformity and obedience pressures (discussed earlier in this chapter) mean that in wartime such movements are supported by the ingroup as long as the target of attacks are the enemy but not so when criticisms are made of the ingroup. For the same reasons, those who would advocate social class mobilization and give priority to class, with slogans such as "A bayonet is a weapon with a worker at both ends," face fierce group and nationalist resistance.

Conflicts also bring about the polarization of social identities. Two nations engaged in total war change their view of not only what kind of a nation they believe the enemy to be but also what kind of a nation they believe themselves to be. This is an extreme version of the 'exaggeration of between-group differences and minimization of within group differences' that arise from categorization and intergroup competition (discussed in Chapter 3 in this book).[28] Total wars in particular are often at the final stages of what I have termed mutual radicalization:

> [T]he process during which two groups in effect 'radicalize' one another – that is, when they become increasingly extreme in their views, develop increasing distrust of one another, move further and further apart in the process, and often take actions that are contrary to their own apparent self-interests.[29]

War and Mental and Societal Health: Questioning Human Rationality

In examining the experiences of US military personnel deployed to Iraq after the 2003 invasion of Iraq by the United States and its allies, John Ni Dieter and Scot Engel write:

> Many of our patients continue to fight a "war within" … they carry on a psychological battle with an enemy who has taken up residence within them … the homeland is now experienced as dangerous, chaotic, and intrusive.[30]

After studying the long-term mental health consequences of war, Stefan Priebe and colleagues report:

> Given the traumatic nature of war experiences and the consistent finding in the literature that PTSD [posttraumatic stress disorder] and depression are the most frequent mental disorders following war, anxiety and particularly posttraumatic stress symptoms, as well as depression, may be expected to be high. Raised levels of paranoia may be a result of the loss of trust in human relationships in war.[31]

The material consequences of total wars are well documented,[32] but the mental health consequences are far more serious, more complex, and more difficult to deal with. This is particularly in the case of mental health suffering of children, who are especially vulnerable during wartime.[33] Studies of children during wartime reveal a variety of severe mental health problems, including PTSD and depression, as well as severe problems in psychological development and progress in education.[34] Sexual violence is often inflicted on children, with girls most often being the targets. In these cases, physical injury tends to be compounded by stigma, shame, and isolation.[35]

Another key theme in the twenty-first-century research on the mental health consequences of war is the long-term nature of these consequences. For example, through interviews conducted with about 4,000 people on average eight years after the war in the former Yugoslavia, it was found that severe mental health problems still persisted among most participants.[36] Another study conducted twenty-five years after the conflict in the former Yugoslavia showed that particular groups of victims, such as those who continue to search for the body of a missing family member, still suffer trauma and have a lower quality of life.[37] Research also suggests that the detrimental mental health effects of war carry across generations, so that the children of those who suffered in wartime also experience abnormally high mental health problems as adults.[38]

The fact that human beings repeatedly engage in total wars and suffer such serious mental health (and material damage) consequences leads us to question our rationality and to take more seriously Freud's relatively pessimistic view that we can "bind together a considerable number of people in love so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness."[39] The direct implication of Freud's perspective is that aggression against outgroups is inevitable; it is a price we pay for achieving peace and positive sentiments within the ingroup. But there are also rational, material perspective on war that lead us to be more optimistic about solutions.[40]

From a rationalist perspective, we can make ourselves aware of the factors that influence us, and we can act in ways that take into consideration and bring about the necessary adjustments for the impact of war on our behavior, including in politics and political behavior. For example, we are aware that under wartime pressures there is a tendency for us to conform and obey more and to suffer *groupthink*, the tendency for people in groups to converge on unwise courses of action they would have avoided if they were making the decision individually.[41] Also, wartime conditions are more likely to result in polarization and mutual radicalization in politics.[42] But the existence of knowledge about these trends among researchers and some others does not result, as rationalists would lead us to expect, in society at large being able to resist and avoid these same trends. There are numerous types of behavior that we know we should avoid, because they have harmful consequences that we can rationally recognize, yet we continue to repeat these harmful behaviors. This reflects some of the limits of the rationalist perspective.

Next, I turn to consider one of the perhaps surprising outcomes of total war, one that some would interpret as favorable: wealth distribution.

War and Wealth Distribution

> Throughout recorded history, the most powerful leveling invariably resulted from the most powerful shocks … The physical destruction wrought by industrial-scale warfare, confiscatory taxation, government intervention in the economy, inflation, disruption to global flows of goods and capital, and other factors all combined to wipe out elites' wealth and redistribute resources.
>
> Walter Scheidel[43]

The impact of total war on economic activity, such as the distribution of wealth in different economic sectors as a result of war and the difficulty and length of time needed for economic recovery following wars,[44] has received robust research attention. Research has also made us more aware of the severe impact war has on poverty, so that countries that experience repeated and/or continuous conflicts accumulate a more significant *conflict debt*,[45] increasing the persistence and size of poverty. A related research literature has tested the thesis that total war leads to a redistribution of wealth and a decline in inequality,[46] as indicated by the above quotation from Scheidel. In considering the impact of war on wealth distribution, an important question is the extent to which this impact is temporary. For example, on the issue of economic recovery following war, evidence

suggests that countries such as Germany returned to an established level of economic development following the end of World War II. After considering why war should lead to greater wealth equality, I address whether this is a temporary deviation from the 'normal' path of wealth inequality or whether this is a resetting of the normal path.

There are a number of key reasons why total wars should lead to a redistribution and levelling of wealth (there is also some evidence that wars before the twentieth century could result in lower wealth inequality[47]). Of course, expensive wars have been waged by governments before the twentieth century, but expense alone does not result in a redistribution and levelling of wealth. What is new in total wars of the modern era is the complete and forced mobilization and involvement of the masses in the war effort. Total wars necessitate enormous sacrifices from everyone in the population, not just devoting themselves to producing for the war effort and fighting in the war but also being the targets and victims of all-out enemy aggression. Under these conditions, the idea that everyone, including the rich, should pay their fair share becomes prominent.

Total wars require total mobilization and conscription as a means of raising a military. But conscription usually involves young men (and sometimes women), with older people being exempt. One way in which young people can be compensated is if older people, who own the vast majority of the wealth in society, are forced to make a larger monetary contribution to the war effort. This is another reason why governments feel justified to implement higher taxes on the rich during wartime, as happened in the United States and the United Kingdom,[48] for example.

Moreover, in war conditions the masses become particularly sensitive to profiteering and intolerant toward those who seem to be taking advantage of the wartime situation. In wartime, the urgent needs of society change in some respects, the production of certain goods become more essential and others less so. But irrespective of which goods and services are a priority, it is companies owned by the rich that continue to produce and make profits. But in wartime, the tolerance of the general population decreases for high wealth concentration and profit-making. The role of this 'tolerance' becomes particularly important in democracies, where people will be more supportive of wars if, as Jonathan Caverley puts it, "the costs in treasure can be shifted to an affluent minority."[49]

Another feature of total wars that make wealth distribution and leveling more likely is that they push governments and societies to the brink, so that total defeat and collapse are either more probable or actual – for both sides in the conflict. For example, consider the circumstances of Britain

and Germany in the two worlds wars: Britain came out on the winning side and Germany on the losing side in both world wars, but the human and material costs of these total wars for Britain was considerable and arguably an important factor in speeding up the decline of the British Empire. Because of both sides experiencing these extreme conditions, where everyone is faced with enormous sacrifices, governments feel more empowered than they do during peacetime to push the rich to make more sacrifices and share more of their wealth (by paying more of the war debt through progressive taxation, e.g.).

But it is not only in more democratic societies that wartime pressures lead to wealth redistribution and lower inequality. In an analysis of the impact of World War II on wealth distribution in Japan, a country that before World War II was characterized by very high inequality and dictatorial government, Scheidel reports:

> In 1938, the country's "1 percent" received 19.9 percent of all reported income before taxes and transfers. Within the next seven years, their share dropped by two-thirds, all the way down to 6.4 percent. More than half of this loss was incurred by the richest tenth of the top bracket: their income share collapsed from 9.2 percent to 1.9 percent in the same period … shifts in the distribution of income … pale in comparison to the even more dramatic destruction of the elite's wealth. The declared real value of the largest 1 percent of estates in Japan fell by … almost 97 percent between 1936 and 1949 … the top 0.1 percent of all estates … lost more than 98 percent.[50]

The wealth distribution and leveling that took place in Japan through World War II arose in large part because of the demands made by total war, with Japan's military growing twentyfold in size and sacrifices being forced on everyone. Because of the need for shared sacrifices, Japanese government wartime interventions basically ended the free-market economy and the profits it brought to a tiny super-rich group and provided support for ordinary people in areas such as housing and employment. Two atomic bombs and continuous wartime bombings killed about 700,000 Japanese civilians. Japan was defeated and occupied by US troops. At the end of the war, the new constitution imposed on Japan moved the country toward democracy, giving more power and influence to ordinary Japanese people. More than this, the economic reforms imposed on Japan in the occupation period were similar to the New Deal reforms in the United States, setting up the basic structure for a welfare state, with progressive taxation and wealth distribution.

In essence, because the Japanese elite were seen as responsible for Japan's wartime aggression, major economic and political restrictions were placed

on them, and ordinary Japanese people were given more support in economic and political domains. For example, labor unions were strengthened (60 percent of workers were unionized by 1949), land redistribution was implemented, and the new constitution imposed on Japan gave more freedoms and rights to ordinary people and made political leaders more accountable to voters.

Also, in all Western countries that participated directly in World War II, the wartime conditions brought not only stronger political rights for ordinary people (through stronger labor unions and voting rights, e.g.) but also more wealth distribution and equality that persisted for several decades after the war.[51] Scheidel, who has conducted the most in-depth analysis of this issue, argues that both the world wars had the effect of compressing wealth disparities and that "[i]n World War II, this effect was at work both during the war itself as well as in its aftermath, sustained by the persistence of war-driven policies."[52] However, the research of Thomas Piketty and others on wealth inequality suggests that particularly since the 1970s the trend of increasing wealth concentration has accelerated.[53] Although private wealth and inheritance fell as a result of the two world wars, as Piketty puts it, "this situation did not last long,"[54] and by the latter part of the twentieth century wealth and inheritance accumulation had sharply risen. Research also shows that since the late twentieth century labor unions have been in decline.[55] Although some of the political and labor rights that ordinary people had gained during World War II could not be taken back, wealth disparities have increased and labor unions representing the rights of workers have been weakened. These shifts back to a historical norm suggest that changes in political plasticity were short term.

In conclusion, although total wars force increases in political plasticity in some domains, this effect does not last with respect to the rich–poor divide. Within four decades after World War II, wealth concentration has accelerated to reach new heights.

Concluding Comment

Total wars force governments to demand sacrifices from all of society, including the rich. Confronted with possible catastrophic national defeat, as happened to Japan in World War II, the rich are forced by circumstances to give up some of their wealth superiority, and ordinary people and minorities gain more economic clout and political rights.[56] The sense of 'shared sacrifice' is reflected in the 1945 victory of the Labor Party in the UK general elections, with their social welfare platform, as well as the

presidency of the Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt from 1933 until 1945, which brought the proworker New Deal policies. After total wars, it is not possible for governments, including those representing highly conservative interests, to take back all the political rights gained by ordinary people during wartime. However, since World War II, and particularly since the last part of the twentieth century, wealth accumulation has increased, as has the relative wealth advantage of the rich. Also, labor unions have become weaker and the 'gig economy' has lowered welfare benefits and increased instability for workers.[57]

CHAPTER 10

Technology Forces Change

> There can be little doubt that the book was one of the great forces for change in sixteenth-century Europe. And at the center of this lay the Reformation. The connection between the book and the Reformation seems so obvious that it needs little extra comment. The powerful impetus given to the spread of the new doctrines by the medium of print was widely recognized in its own day – indeed, part of Luther's great genius as a reformer was his speedy recognition of the power of the printed word to carry on his fight with the papacy and articulate his theological precepts.
>
> Andrew Pettegree and Matthew Hall[1]

The invention of the movable-type printing press by Johannes Gutenberg (*c.* 1400–1468) enabled the mass production of pamphlets, books, and other printed materials in the West, paving the way for enormous changes, including in Christianity and other major religions.[2] For example, empirical assessment demonstrates that cities with at least one printing press by 1500 were significantly more likely to have become Protestant,[3] suggesting that printed material played an important role in strengthening the Reformation, shifting minds and hearts to join the new religious movements. Of course, the changes brought about by the printing press also impacted political behavior and facilitated the great political revolutions and transformations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After all, without the printing press the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) would not have had such wide influence,[4] with major societies being transformed through communist ideas by the early twentieth century (e.g., the Russian Revolution of 1917 was in highly important respects influenced by communist ideas).

Of course, I am not suggesting a simple causal relationship between technological innovation and social and political changes. As Denis Murray cautions,

> While historical data do show that the introduction of different literacy technologies involves some similar phenomena – evolving and supporting technologies, resistance, fervent promotion, a belief in its inevitability, and potential for control of liberation – the underlying premise that the technology causes a "revolution" is not supported by historical data. Hence, today we need to be very careful about drawing analogies between the possible effects of information technology and those of previous literacy technologies.[5]

But it is clear that technological innovations make certain social and political changes *more probable*, just as the development of alphabetical writing from around 4,000 years ago enabled account keeping and the development of more complex organizations and governments.[6]

While we can look with hindsight and some objectivity at the enormous changes associated with alphabetical writing and later the printing press, we are still in the midst of the ongoing electronic communications revolution and we continue to experience the enormous but changing impact of the Internet ("the electronic network of networks that links people and information through computers and other digital devices allowing person-to-person communication and information retrieval"[7]), Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and other forms of cutting-edge electronic communications systems. The electronics revolution has a dizzying pace of change, and the next few decades are not predictable – just as the situation we are experiencing today was not predicted even as the Internet emerged in the early 1980s and rapidly expanded in the 1990s.[8] We can look back critically and reassess some of the optimistic and perhaps simplistic perspectives on how the electronics revolution would lead to a flood of democratization and a decline of dictatorships.

From a rational viewpoint, one would expect the electronics revolution to increase political plasticity in a way that strengthens openness and democracies. I address this optimistic perspective in the first section of this chapter. But this optimistic perspective of the 'electronics revolution as an aid to democracy' fails to consider limitations imposed by political plasticity. Yes, electronic communications influence political changes but not always in a constructive and more open direction. Electronic communications have also strengthened rigidity in political plasticity, bringing about more of the same, a continuation of dictatorship and strongman authoritarian leadership. This is examined in the second section, where I focus on the actual outcomes of the electronics revolution, which have been complex, mixed, and in some important respects (from a democratic perspective) negative. Third, I turn to consider the three main stages in the

development of how dictatorships have used electronic communications, to strengthen closed societies and weaken more open ones. In the concluding comment, I discuss the electronics revolution in relation to citizenship: What psychological characteristics do citizens need to have so that the electronics revolution strengthens democracy rather than dictatorship?

The Electronics Revolution as an Aid to Democracy

If one begins with the assumption that humans are rational creatures, it is logical to conclude that the electronics revolution will serve as a kind of equalizer, giving information and power to ordinary people and necessarily strengthening democracies and weakening dictatorships. This optimistic perspective was more evident early in the 'liberation technology' revolution, for example as reflected in Peter Levine's description in 2002:

> Enthusiasts believe that computer networks will make various forms of political participation more convenient, thus increasing participation. For example, we will be able to vote from home or make financial contributions with the click of a mouse. At the same time, information will be readily available, so citizens will possess the knowledge they need to participate effectively. Faced with an informed and powerful citizenry, various elites will grudgingly allow more public participation. Among other innovations, we may see frequent online referenda. Citizens may deliberate *en masse*, creating a kind of ongoing national town meeting. As a result, some argue, the public will make wise decisions without much need for mediating institutions such as newspapers, legislatures, parties – maybe even governments.[9]

If the above optimistic view of social media impact is correct, then data on the increasing use of social media around the world enhance the rosy picture of current trends and the development of the Internet as the new town square.[10] According to data from the Pew Research Center, about 70 percent of Americans use some kind of social media (this percentage remained steady from 2016 to 2021),[11] and about 46 percent get news through social media (percentages who get news through social media are in a similar range in Europe).[12] Among people with internet access, 85 percent in China use social media and 29.8 percent use social media every day to find political information.[13] A comparison of the United States, China, and five major European countries showed that social media plays an important role in the lives of people in all the countries examined (studies on social media use in Russia and Kazakhstan show the same[14]), but people in China continue to rely more on television as a source of political

information and they are less likely to express their political opinions through social media.[15]

Supporters of the electronics revolution have argued that electronic communications are bringing enormous benefits to people in education,[16] health care,[17] and other important applied domains. This is particularly through the 'Internet of Things' (IoT) or the 'Internet of Objects,' which involves the integration of numerous different types of electronic devices into the same network, allowing people in many different (sometimes very distant) locations to collaborate in real time. For example, the health care system is benefitting from advances in electronic networks and devices, such as Body Area Network (BAN), a wireless network of integrated wearable computing devices. The BAN is a system that the patient can carry, providing continuous monitoring of vital signs of physical health, such as heartbeat, body temperature, respiration, blood pressure, and various physiological sensors (e.g., ECG – electrocardiogram). Information from health indicators is relayed to central monitors, so that health care professionals can be better informed and also alerted before emergencies arise. Electronic communications have also enabled what is termed 'medical tourism,' where people travel to another country to receive dental, surgical, or medical care.[18]

The Internet can serve as an equalizer in the medical field, because it gives power to patients, who are able to look for information about their illnesses, the treatments and medications they are receiving, as well as the online reputations of the medical doctors, nurses, and hospitals serving them. Over 70 percent of patients in the United States and the United Kingdom typically conduct Internet searches as part of their interactions with medical services.[19] Patients can gain access to medical information that previously was available only to medical experts and professionals, and this can (in appearance or actuality) create a challenge to medical expertise.[20] However, the overall outcome of patient power has been beneficial.[21]

The contributions of electronic communications to the international business sector, even those of low-income societies, have been tremendous; as Lucas Dalenogare and colleagues argue, "From the market point of view, digital technologies allow companies to offer new digital solutions to customers … From the operational perspective, digital technologies … are proposed to reduce set-up times, labor and material costs and processing times, resulting in higher productivity."[22] Empirical studies show that social media serves to improve communications and knowledge sharing among employees, resulting in increased productivity in organizations.[23]

Of course, part of the greater productivity, efficiency, and cost-cutting comes from businesses replacing human labor with electronic systems and robots. This trend will undoubtedly continue, and advances in electronic systems and robotics will lead to human labor being replaced in many more types of work, although in domains such as care for the elderly (despite the cost-cutting 'benefits') there are ethical dilemmas concerning the extent to which 'machine care' can replace human care.[24] But in many cases machines are helping to improve the quality of life of workers, by taking over work that is repetitive and boring.

The electronics revolution has also in some ways democratized the business world, by providing access to information and markets to tiny start-ups and small businesses. At the heart of this trend is digital entrepreneurship and digital start-ups that have grown from businesses in home basements and garages into multibillion-dollar global businesses, such as Amazon, Google, Facebook, and Airbnb.[25] The electronics revolution suggests that anyone with a computer and access to the Internet can launch new businesses that could be the Amazon or Facebook of tomorrow. The age of digital entrepreneurship has in a sense globalized the American dream, the idea that anyone can become hugely successful and rise to the top of society, as long as they have talent and motivation – and Internet access. Indeed, the race for success in the electronics revolution seems relatively fair, and on a level playing field, because it seems to require so little resource as a prerequisite for a person to enter the race.

But it is in the domain of politics that the electronic media revolution could bring most dramatic changes and benefits (as indicated by the quotation from Peter Levine that begins this section). Electronic communications hold the promise of shrinking the distance between ordinary people and national political leaders, as well as bringing rural populations closer to elite politics in capital cities. This is an increasingly important potential, as populations rise (there are now close to 1.4 billion people in the largest democracy in the world, India) and the challenge of inclusiveness grows even greater. The enormous task of communicating with and integrating the views of such vast populations can be facilitated through the electronic communications. In a study of social media and democracy in 125 countries around the world, Facebook penetration (used as an indicator of social media) was shown to be associated with improvements in democracy.[26] Social network sites such as Facebook have been interpreted as generating *social capital*, the norms, networks, and other features of social life that enable participants to collaboratively pursue shared goals, and being associated with fuller political engagement.[27] Also, researchers

have documented how social media has assisted antidictatorship collective movements, such as the Green uprising in Iran in 2008–2009 and the Arab Spring revolutions in the early 2010s.[28] Expansive use of electronic communications helped collective movements to push out of power the Philippine president Joseph Estrada in 2001 and the Spanish prime minister José María Aznar in 2009 and also push the Catholic Church to stop harboring child sex offenders.[29] In more developed democracies also, such as those in Europe and North America, the electronics revolution has the potential to help nurture better informed and more politically engaged citizens.

Four characteristics in particular make the contributions of electronic communications (at least potentially) highly powerful and beneficial in the political domain.[30] First, anyone with access to the Internet can join the electronic town square. Given that one of the main reasons provided for low political participation is the high cost of entry (e.g., in the United States, even an action as 'simple' as voting requires scarce resources, particularly for minorities facing serious barriers to voting in some regions of the country), the low cost of entry into politics means that far larger numbers of people could become politically engaged. Evidence suggests that relatively easy political behaviors, such as commenting online on a political issue, can serve as a gateway to more serious political activism.[31] A study of young people showed that political use of social network sites was a good predictor of their participation in traditional political activities.[32] As Robert Faris and Bruce Etling have argued, "If we believe the thesis that … organizational costs are an impediment to improving democratic action, then we might reasonably expect digital technologies to have an important positive impact on democracy."[33]

Second, because vast numbers of people could contribute through electronic communications with little costs, as long as the Internet and social media are accessible it is more difficult to control or censor all the different voices. Through the expansion of electronic networks and the availability of mass-produced cheaper computers, there is a potential for the voices of a far larger number of people around the world to be heard uncensored. Because electronic communications have had some success at crossing national boundaries (of course, dictatorships set up barriers – such as the 'Great Firewall of China,' discussed later in this chapter), prodemocracy protests can reverberate internationally and local collective movements can find global echoes. This happened during the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013, when protesters changed their online activities both in relation to

events on the ground locally in Istanbul, Turkey, and in relation to online activities internationally.[34]

Third, as argued for example by Andrew Feeberg,[35] in some respects democracy has been extended to the domain of technology and electronic communications in particular. The future of democracy has become intertwined with, and dependent upon, the future of electronic communications. Looked at optimistically, as the electronics revolution progresses, so does democracy; as electronic communications become more inclusive of different voices, so does democracy. Although people are the recipients of information through electronic communications, every receiver can also contribute to the 'electronic town square' – much more easily than in traditional media. Given the advances we are experiencing through the electronics revolution, we can look forward to advances in democracy.

Fourth, the widespread use of electronic communications systems in different countries around the world means that governments that censor such communications go against the vast majority of people. By 2017 about 64 percent of people in nineteen low-income economies reported that they use the Internet at least occasionally or own a smart phone, while 87 percent of people in high-income economies reported using the Internet at least occasionally and 72 percent reported owning a smart phone.[36] In 2021, 81 percent and 69 percent of Americans reported using YouTube and Facebook respectively.[37] Even in low-income societies, economies now rely heavily on electronic communications and particularly on mobile phones. Thus, a government that censors electronic communications would also seriously damage the economy of their own society.

In summary, then, the electronics revolution has the potential to democratize our world in many different ways. Ordinary people now have access to information that was previously available only to experts and the elite. There are practical possibilities for expanding participation in decision-making, so that through referenda and other means using electronic communication, the views and choices of ordinary people can more directly impact how we are governed. In health, education, business, and just about all the major sectors of society, the electronics revolution has given ordinary people access to almost infinite information. These changes could democratize societies. There is a potential for political plasticity to be dramatically increased in support of actualized democracy. However, as we shall see in the next section, the actual impact of the electronics revolution has been in some ways antidemocratic and in support of authoritarianism.

The Actual Outcomes of the Electronics Revolution

> [T]he best practical reason to think that social media can help bring political change is that both dissidents and governments think they can. All over the world, activists believe in the utility of these tools and take steps to use them accordingly. And the governments they contend with think social media tools are powerful, too, and are willing to harass, arrest, exile, or kill users in response.
>
> Clay Shirky[38]

> In February 2018, the U. S. Justice Department indicted 13 Russian nationals, listing them – and the organization they worked for – as central to a Russian state effort to interfere with the 2016 U.S. Presidential election.
>
> Darren Linvill et al.[39]

In the early decades of the twenty-first century it has become abundantly clear that the electronics revolution is not unidirectional in impact, necessarily changing political plasticity in a way that supports more open societies and the spreading of enlightened thinking and open minds around the world – far from it. The new electronic communications systems are also being used very effectively by potential (e.g., Donald Trump) and actual (e.g., Vladimir Putin) dictators, as well as dictatorship regimes (e.g., particularly the largest ones, Russia and China) and authoritarian movements (e.g., the far-right nationalist movements headed by Recep Erdogan in Turkey, Narendra Modi in India, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Marine Le Pen in France) broadly, to magnify divisions, strengthen ethnocentrism, and weaken open societies. The global potential of electronic communications has meant that not only do dictatorships control and censor such communications within their own borders but they invest heavily in spreading their influence across the world in order to help authoritarian movements and leaders in more open societies – as Russia has been doing in the United States (although it is notoriously difficult to measure the extent of this influence[40]).

Of course, attempts by dictatorships to influence politics in democracies precede the age of electronic communications.[41] In the 1960s the Soviet Union worked in several ways to try to prevent Richard Nixon (1913–1994) from becoming the US president, favoring instead John Kennedy (1917–1963). The Soviets also attempted to have Martin Luther King (1929–1968) replaced by a more radical individual as the leader of the civil rights movement; the Soviets preferred a leader who would link the American civil rights movement with a global anti-imperialist movement (with the United States interpreted as the global imperialist power). Tactics used by the Soviets in those earlier years included

forging documents and spreading conspiracy theories, by planting articles in newspapers, for example.

Electronic communications have enabled dictatorships to develop a broader campaign to weaken democracies and strengthen authoritarianism, using a wider array of soft and hard tactics. Putin's attacks on countries neighboring Russia, particularly Ukraine, illustrate this trend. Since taking over as absolute dictator in 2000, Putin has used cyber warfare, as well as more direct military pressures and attacks, to thwart democratic movements in Eastern European countries that were once forced to be part of the Soviet Union. In Ukraine, Putin used cyber warfare to fight against the democratic movement that finally led to the election of Volodymyr Zelensky as president in 2019. But Putin also used direct violence, invading the Crimean Peninsula and annexing it from Ukraine in 2014, and then launching the invasion to try to capture all of Ukraine in 2022. Throughout, cyber warfare has been at the heart of the attacks on Ukrainian democracy. Putin's antidemocracy campaign dovetailed with Trump's attempts to use corrupt officials in Ukraine to find dirt on his political rival Joe Biden, and then Trump orchestrated a smear campaign to justify getting rid of Marie Yovanovitch, the US ambassador to Ukraine who would not do his bidding against Biden.[42] In this case, the policies of an actual dictator in Russia were in harmony with those of a potential dictator in the United States.

Thus, the actual impact of electronic communications on political behavior has been mixed, in some cases supporting authoritarianism and dictatorships. The use dictatorships have made of electronic communications has gone through three stages, as described in the following section.

The Three Stages of Dictatorship Use of Electronic Communications

The world has now passed the initial euphoria about electronic communications and the Internet serving as a kind of 'liberation technology.'[43] Clearly, dictatorships have adapted and are now using this technology to support their own antidemocratic goals. As Alina Polyakova and Chris Meserole explain,[44] "China and Russia have learned how to leverage both the internet and information technology in ways that have reduced rather than expanded human freedom. Worse, they have also begun to export their models of digital authoritarianism across the globe." It is useful to assess the relationship between dictatorships and electronic communications as passing through three stages: stage one, negative control;[45] stage two, cooptation; and stage three, self-censorship. Each of these stages is described here.

Negative Control: The initial reaction of dictatorships to electronic communications was blunt and primitive, in the sense that they attempted to directly control access to such communications. Those who represented a threat to the dictatorship were denied access, and the Internet was shut down during times of unrest. The most extensive example of this negative control is still found in China, where the Great Firewall of China is used to limit information from the outside world and censor information within the country. An extensive centralized government bureaucracy has developed in China to monitor, censor, and limit electronic communications among about a billion users.[46] This kind of negative control is also practiced in smaller dictatorships, such as Iran. For example, during widespread unrests in Iran in 2008–2009, the regime routinely slowed down or shut down access to the Internet.

But negative control comes with heavy costs. First, because electronic communications are used so extensively in the twenty-first century, the denial of access immediately becomes common knowledge among the general population and can be interpreted by both opponents and supporters of the regime as a sign of government weakness and vulnerability. This is a weakness that cannot be hidden. Second, because contemporary economies rely so heavily on electronic communications, there arises the 'dictator's dilemma':[47] whether and how much to sacrifice the economy for political goals? Particularly in times of political unrest, if electronic communications are not shut down, then the regime could be in danger and might even topple, but if electronic communications are shut down, then the economy will suffer. This is actually not much of a dilemma when the regime is facing serious threat, because dictatorships give priority to self-preservation over economic performance, but it is a dilemma when dictatorial regimes face potential threat and they have to gage how much and how quickly opposition forces could mobilize using electronic communications.

Cooptation: Electronic communications and elections are now routinely coopted by what I have termed *democratic dictatorships*, which use "the language and rituals of democracy … to both divert attention away from and to justify absolute rule by a dictator."[48] With respect to elections, Russia, Iran and some other dictatorships routinely put on national and local elections that are rigged: Opposition candidates are excluded in different ways (e.g., killed, jailed, censored), and certain 'acceptable' candidates are helped (e.g., through ballot stuffing).

These phony elections are useful to dictatorships in several ways. First, regime supporters are collectively mobilized and made more visible.

Second, opposition groups are better identified and victimized. Third, many in the general population are coerced to cast votes in support of prescreened proregime candidates, and in this way they are positioned to count as regime supporters. Indeed, having cast proregime votes, acting (even secretly) as critics of the regime might lead citizens to experience cognitive dissonance, arising from the contradiction between voting for a proregime candidate and criticizing the regime. Phony elections are used by dictatorships to distract from the fact that control is in the hands of the dictator, but also to legitimize the regime as reflecting the will of the people, as reflected in 'democratic elections.'

Electronic communications are now also coopted by dictatorships, particularly Russia and China.[49] This cooptation takes place through a number of tactics that are more sophisticated than negative control. First, electronic communications are closely monitored so as to identify opposition to the regime. If this opposition calls for free and fair elections, a multiparty system, or other real prodemocracy changes, then it is shut down and the people involved are victimized. However, if the opposition calls attention to local corruption, inefficient programs, or other things that can be changed without diminishing the power of the central authority, then at least cosmetic changes are adopted and implemented. This gives the dictatorship new opportunities to demonstrate that it is responding to the will of the people. In this way, certain electronic communications critical of the regime are adapted to actually reinforce the dictatorship.

Second, the dictatorial regime invests heavily in building up the presence of actual and fabricated regime supporters, who include computer technicians hired by the regime to spread proregime messages, to disrupt, mystify, redirect, and if necessary to cripple antiregime groups using electronic communications. Because electronic communications allow for the source of messages to remain hidden, this second tactic can be highly effective, with the goal of shaping the contents of, rather than shutting down, electronic communications. By 'disliking' antiregime comments, leaving negative comments on antiregime websites, inserting false and misleading information, and in general creating chaos among regime critics using "the autocrat's digital toolkit,"[50] the proregime web armies in China and Russia have helped marginalize the opposition and strengthen networked authoritarianism.[51]

The third cooptation tactic used particularly by Russia is to try to influence political events in other countries by developing credible connections with populations there. An extensive study of Twitter tactics used by the Internet Research Agency (IRA), a tool of the Russian government,

showed that 52.6 percent of tweets intended to influence events in the United States were designed to give credibility to the IRA and to camouflage deeper political motives.[52] Many of these tweets repeated sometimes mundane, noncontroversial events and facts. The goal is to first establish credible sources of information, then use these sources to influence politics in the United States.

Self-censorship:

> [N]ew technologies now afford rulers fresh methods for preserving power … Surveillance empowered by artificial intelligence (AI) … allows despots to automate the monitoring and tracking of their opposition in ways that are far less intrusive than traditional surveillance … no one has to pay a software program to monitor people's text messages, read their social media posts, or track their movements. And once citizens learn to assume that all those things are happening, they alter their behavior without the regime having to resort to physical repression. Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Erica Frantz, & Joseph Wright[53]

Self-censorship is the third stage in the relationship between dictatorships and electronic communications. During this stage, the dictatorial regime uses direct and indirect means to make it well known among the general population that electronic communications are monitored and antigovernment activities are seriously punished. Dictatorial regimes also intentionally but 'unofficially' spread news about harsh punishments such as torture.[54] The objective is to influence populations to self-censor. Self-censorship ensures that political plasticity, even if it increases, will return to lower levels in a self-censoring population.

In conclusion, the relationship between dictatorships and electronic communications has transformed, from simplistic negative control (e.g., slowing or shutting down the Internet) to cooptation and inducing self-censorship among the population. Instead of revolutionizing and democratizing societies, electronic communications now also serve as the dictator's friend – at home and abroad.

Concluding Comment

The initial euphoria about the liberating effect of electronic communications has now passed,[55] and we are in a position to undertake a more realistic assessment of the relationship between the new electronic technologies and political behavior. It has become clear that the Internet and different types of electronic communications can shift political plasticity and bring about prodemocracy changes but only under certain limited conditions.

For example, effectively gathering correct information through electronic communications requires higher technical Internet skills,[56] as well as the ability to go to original sources rather than read commentaries made by others on those sources.[57] Also, individuals need to develop skills to avoid being sucked into *echo chambers*, contexts in which users encounter only opinions, values, and beliefs that correspond with their own.[58]

Elsewhere I have discussed the psychological characteristics individuals need to have in order to successfully maneuver in this challenging new twenty-first-century electronic context and to participate in and sustain democracy.[59] The first of these ten psychological characteristics is the ability to acknowledge 'I could be wrong' at the start of all encounters, debates, and investigations. This default position is not possible for individuals who have unshakeable faith in an ideology or faith or belief system. Other characteristics that need to be nurtured in the democratic citizen is openness to interact with, learn from, and also share knowledge with dissimilar others. Developing an education system that socializes citizens capable of these behaviors is a highly difficult challenge but a very worthy one. Electronic technologies have a potentially highly important role in socializing democratic citizens, but in practice this potential remains unfulfilled. Electronic communications have not changed political plasticity in the direction that was initially envisaged.

CHAPTER II

Globalization and Deglobalization

One of the most powerful, all-embracing, and irresistible sources of change has been *globalization*, the realization of the global village through increasingly deeper forms of interconnectedness between economies, organizations, and people across national boundaries and regions. Globalization is transforming a great deal around the world, including human behavior.[1] In the ideal, the end goal of globalization is a world in which people, goods, services, ideas, and cultural products move freely across regions and national borders, and people perceive themselves to be part of one world and one group, humankind. The fruition of this ideal makes it possible for individual human beings to see their own interests in line with the interests of the rest of the world and to make sacrifices for the sake of all humanity to tackle serious challenges, such as global warming and world peace. The economic forces motoring globalization seem unstoppable, so that we will inevitably end up in "One World, Ready or Not" as one author puts it.[2]

On the surface, then, globalization seems to be a force that is changing human behavior to become high in political plasticity, even in domains such as ethnicity, nationalism, and religion. Ready or not, we are on a one-way road to a different future; our behavior is changing and the global village is taking shape – so it seems. The globalization movement seems irresistible and unstoppable. But particularly since the last decades of the twentieth century, there has evolved an anti- or de- globalization movement. The globalization ideal has come under attack and been rejected by massive populist movements led by authoritarian strongmen, as well as radical white nationalists, extremist Muslims, and an array of other groups from different political backgrounds who see globalization ideals as being against their collective interests. There is increasing support for *deglobalization*, the movement away from globalization, toward local identities and allegiances. As we shall see, there are ways in which the demise of the globalization ideal is shaped by limitations in political plasticity.

In the first section of this chapter, I elaborate on progress already made toward the ideal of globalization. This includes the expansion of free trade and the free market, the increased movement of people across national borders and regions, the decrease in language diversity and the increased influence of English as a global language, the development of a global shared youth culture, and the development of larger regional units such as the European Union, going beyond the nation-state. In the second section, I discuss how globalization ideals go against certain psychological processes that limit political plasticity and inhibit change. These psychological processes include basic aspects of cognition such as categorization, as well as social behaviors such as ethnocentrism. In the third section, I examine limits to political plasticity that have resulted in deglobalization. This has been associated with a disparate set of movements, including different types of radicalizations, such as radical national, ethnic, and religious movements. Associated with this is the rise of authoritarian strongman leadership, which strengthens ethnocentrism and extreme nationalism but weakens democracy.[3]

The Ideal of Globalization

Perhaps the inevitability and the ideal of globalization is best portrayed by the titles of two books by Kenishi Ohmae: *Borderless World* and *The End of the Nation-State*.[4] This ideal of an open, integrated world, with people, ideas, cultures, and everything else moving freely from place to place, is contrasted with a world of static nation-states and robust nationalism, ethnocentrism, and different kinds of physical and symbolic borders between human groups. Globalization is associated with peace, whereas a world rigidly separated by national, religious, ethnic, linguistic, and other boundaries is associated with conflict. The ideal of an integrated and more peaceful world has been discussed by various thinkers particularly after World War II,[5] but from the 1980s there was an acceleration and diffusion of the idea that borders around the world would fall and the nation-state would experience a serious decline, and eventually perhaps even disappear. The result would be fewer conflicts. After all, most modern wars involve nations going to war against one another; the dissolution of nations would bring an end to this kind of war.

In line with economic arguments going back to Adam Smith (1723–1790), proponents of globalization propose that free trade and a global market economy bring commercial interdependencies that strengthen peace and bring economic benefits to all humanity. Major international institutions have been established to help achieve this goal. Since World War II, the

International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO) have helped to expand international trade and the economic integration of the world. This economic integration helps keep the world peaceful (the idea being that economic partners are less likely to go to war against one another), with huge benefits for humankind – so globalization supporters argue.[6]

A review of discussions in favor of globalization, which were particularly dominant until the second decade of the twenty-first century, reveals two strong themes: first, an emphasis on the inevitability of globalization and, second, the highlighting of the economic and other (e.g., strengthening of peace) benefits of globalization. With respect to inevitability, a wide range of indicators are used to demonstrate the relentless march of globalization; for example, we learn that

> [t]he value of trade (goods and services) as a percentage of world GDP increased from 42.1 percent in 1980 to 62.1 percent in 2007 … Foreign direct investment increased from 6.5 percent of world GDP in 1980 to 31.8 percent in 2006 … The number of minutes spent on cross-border telephone calls, on a per-capita basis, increased from 7.3 in 1991 to 28.8 in 2006.[7]

In an influential book, Thomas Friedman discussed globalization as "the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before.[8] This inevitable march toward greater globalization is seen to result in English as the lingua franca,[9] international standardization in (at least) science education,[10] and global rankings of higher education institutions.[11]

With respect to the proposed benefits of globalization, China's actions in the global context provide an interesting indicator. For example, in 2001 China made English a compulsory subject for children in primary schools (China has since ended this policy) and also joined the WTO, which is designed to facilitate the free flow of international trade. It is estimated that joining the WTO raised China's economic growth rate from 2002 to 2007 by 2.4 percent and also benefited the rest of the world by increasing China's export and import growth rates respectively by 13.2 percent and 18.89 percent annually.[12] With respect to changes in the rest of the world, between 1980 and 2010, international trade increased by about thirty-five times, and also trade became more global and brought benefits for the poor.[13] According to Fredrik Erixon, Director of the European Center for International Political Economy, "On average, the gains from opening up to trade are 63 percent for the 10 percent of income earners with the lowest incomes and 28 percent for the 10 percent with the highest incomes. In

other words, the lower the income, the bigger the gain."[14] In an expansive discussion, Gale Johnson identified increases in life expectancy, agricultural productivity, and immunization as examples of the benefits of globalization.[15] For example, life expectancy in all developing countries increased from 46 years in 1960 to 64.4 years in 1997, by 2000 the crop yields in both high- and low-income societies more than doubled compared to prior to 1940, and immunization against tuberculosis and measles reached over 79 percent for children in all developing countries.

It is the young who are most impacted by processes of globalization, as they are growing up in societies that are becoming in important respects more similar,[16] and globalization provides the context for their development.[17] First, compared to older adults the young have more potential to be impacted by globalization, because they are in the process of taking shape socially and cognitively. Second, the young are more integrated with the new electronic communications technologies and social media, which has greater global reach. Third, youth culture, particularly clothing and music, has become more global (I notice this when I give talks to groups of students in different countries – in some respects university students in different countries have become very similar). The ideal of a borderless world, with free movement for everyone and everything, is a good match for youthful idealism.

But the ideal of a global village is contradicted by certain psychological processes that limit political plasticity, as we see in the next section of the chapter.

Psychological Processes, Political Plasticity, and Globalization

The ideal of globalization requires that we perceive and interact with other people as individual human beings without placing them in categories and being influenced by their group memberships and that we give priority to an inclusive identity based on the larger world and on humanity as a whole. This jives with the suggestion that we treat other people as individual humans, rather than as women or men, black or white, Jewish or Christian or Muslim, rich or poor, American or Russian or Chinese, or as members of other types of categories. Very importantly, the ideal of globalization also requires that we give priority to the collective needs of humanity, particularly in order to solve problems such as global warming and collective violence and war. But to what extent do these requirements match our psychological characteristics, and if they do not match, how malleable are these characteristics?

I argue that globalization ideals are in important respects going against certain basic human psychological tendencies that are fairly rigid and low in political plasticity and that these directly shape behavior in ways that limit changes toward globalization ideals. These psychological characteristics include categorization and its consequences, as well as the limited nature of altruism, and the role of ethnicity, religion, nationality, and other important criteria for group formation as a basis for identity development. From this perspective, then, the movement toward globalization ideals could make progress only within the limitations set by our fairly rigid psychological characteristics, starting with the basic process of categorization and our use of categories.

Categories are partitions of the world,[18] such as how we humans partition what for us is visible light, which is the small part of the electromagnetic spectrum that we can see. Cones, specialized neurons in the retina, enable us to detect color. This is part of a shared human visual processing system that results in certain universals in human color perception, such as the dominance of eleven or fewer color categories across different societies.[19] As in most cases of how the world is partitioned, there are both universal (*etic*) and local or culture-specific (*emic*) aspects of color categorization.[20] However, cross-cultural variations in how partitioning takes place should not lead us to neglect the fundamentally important point that partitioning *always takes place*, and categories are cognitive tools used by all humans.[21]

The partitioning of the social world begins very early in life. There is evidence that infants as young as three months can notice differences between the members of different ethnic and gender groups.[22] By the end of the first year of life, infants are categorizing other people on the basis of ethnicity, at least differentiating between the ethnic ingroup and ethnic outgroups.[23] Very importantly, social categorization has consequences that begin to be manifested by the end of the first year of life: There are signs of a preference for the ingroup.[24] By the end of the second year of life, infants have an expectation that ingroup members will preferentially help one another, rather than help an outgroup member.[25] By the age of five, children have developed ideas about ingroup members being morally obligated to one another, in a way that makes it more acceptable to harm an outgroup member rather than an ingroup member.[26] The particular ethnic groups involved, and thus the categories infants use to partition the social world, vary across cultures. What is consistent is the partitioning of the social world, along with the bias in favor of the ingroup.

Both the tendency to engage in social categorization and to show ingroup bias have a functional basis. Social categorization brings the

advantages of categorization processes to the social world,[27] enabling individuals to more efficiently orient themselves in relation to different outgroups and ingroup(s). Knowing the group membership of another person often serves as a shortcut, so the individual can plan for action more efficiently. For example, when John learns that Sally belongs to a vegan cooking group and has devoted herself to a vegan lifestyle, he can plan better for their dinner night out together (he should not attempt to romance her in a steakhouse!).

Similarly, the norm of ingroup favoritism makes the behavior of group members more predictable and better regulated. Group members have an understanding that they will receive special support from other ingroup members, and this enhances cooperation between group members.[28] Also, in our evolutionary past, groups whose members favored the ingroup would have had a survival advantage, because group members would ensure that greater resources would be provided for the ingroup. In this sense, ethnocentrism has a functional basis.

The same evolutionary perspective has led most researchers to argue that there is no true *altruism*, behavior intended to help another without regard for benefit to oneself.[29] For example, imagine if Jane spends hours looking around the neighborhood and finally finds and returns her neighbor's lost dog to receive a $100 reward, is that altruism? Not necessarily, because Jane was rewarded with money. What if Jane tells her neighbor to donate the $100 reward to charity, is that altruism? Not necessarily, because Jane now benefits from the positive reputation she has in the neighborhood ('Jane is so sweet, she found the lost dog and gave the reward to charity. She is a wonderful neighbor!'). Although a few researchers argue that there is true altruism,[30] most argue against.

Sociobiologists propose that the most important forms of helping others, as well as aggressions against others, are driven by the motivation to perpetuate our own genes.[31] Consequently, we help others who share our genes and we are shocked when anyone behaves against this trend. For example, imagine how flabbergasted we are if parents leave their inheritance to strangers rather than to their own children. The same trend is argued to underlie biases in ethnic relations: We are biased in favor of the ethnic ingroup and against ethnic outgroups.[32] (From a sociobiological perspective, this is because we, unconsciously or consciously, perceive the ethnic ingroup to be genetically more similar and the ethnic outgroups to be more dissimilar to us.[33])

These patterns of bias in favor of the ingroup have been amply documented by psychological research, in the shape of intergroup prejudice

and discrimination.[34] Such biases work against the ideal of globalization, according to which we are expected to give priority to 'humanity' rather than local identities. The ideal of globalization requires that people adopt humanity as their primary superordinate or common group identity;[35] if this occurs, local ethnic, religious, national, linguistic, and other identities become secondary. Movement to achieve this ideal requires high political plasticity.

Deglobalization: The Turn Away from Globalization

The globalization movement and its supporters adopt a rationalist-materialist explanation of human behavior. Globalization is proposed as a major factor leading to material benefits for the world,[36] and human beings are assumed to rationally recognize these benefits and support globalization. The rationalist perspective is strongly represented in the field of economics through rational choice theory,[37] which assumes that individuals perform cost–benefit analyses and make decisions that they calculate to be in their best self-interest. But human behavior is not entirely rational; some critics would contend that it is seldom if ever rational (as we discussed in Chapter 7 of this book). In this section, I discuss the often-irrational human motivations underlying deglobalization. In a sense, deglobalization is a movement guided by rigidities in political plasticity.

In the field of psychology and conflict resolution, the rationalist-materialist perspective has been strongly influenced by a line of research originating with the Turkish American psychologist Mozafer Sherif (1906–1988).[38] Sherif conducted highly influential field studies in a summer camp, where the research participants were eleven-to-twelve-year boys, selected for homogeneity so that ethnicity, gender, and other group differences would not influence the results. There were four stages to the basic study. In stage one, the boys arrived at the summer camp and got to know one another. During stage two, two groups were formed, making sure that the boys who had made friends with one another ended up in different groups. This was so that interpersonal friendship would not influence the results. In stage three, the two groups competed against one another in tug-of-war and other such games. During this stage, the attitudes and actions of each group became hostile and aggressive toward the outgroup. Also, more aggressive boys emerged in leadership positions in each group. Now the challenge facing Sherif and his associates was how to end this intergroup conflict and bring about peace between the two groups. This was achieved by introducing *superordinate goals*, which are

goals desired by both groups but possible to achieve only if both groups cooperate in the solution. For example, a truck bringing food to the summer camp apparently broke down and the two groups of boys (who all wanted to be fed!) had to cooperate to pull the truck into the camp. After several such incidents in which solutions were found through the cooperation of all the boys, their attitudes and behavior changed and the two groups of boys became friends again.

Undoubtedly Sherif's approach has great promise and has influenced both applied work and research in important respects.[39] But there are severe limitations to the rationalist-materialist perspective. For example, consider the issues of global warming and world peace, both of which should serve as superordinate goals for humanity. All the scientific evidence points to global warming bringing gigantic disasters for humanity by the end of the twenty-first century (as discussed in Chapter 7 of this book), and with about 12,000–13,000 nuclear warheads in the world we are in serious danger of obliterating all of humankind. Global warming and world peace should serve as superordinate goals, but they have failed to do so.

What is preventing humankind from adopting and acting on superordinate goals such as global warming and world peace? One kind of answer is given by Garrett Hardin who first discussed *The Tragedy of the Commons*,[40] and there have been follow-up attempts to relate this 'tragedy' to world peace and climate change.[41] The tragedy of the commons occurs when individuals have open access to a resource, unconstrained by institutions and laws, and they each act according to their own self-interests without being influenced by the common good and end up depleting the resource and damaging the interests of everyone. For example, in the domain of global warming, in the twenty-first century we still have many nations using fossil fuels and damaging the global environment in other ways, in pursuit of their own national interests and in disregard to the common good of humanity.

Another important way in which the rationalist-materialist perspective is limited concerns the lack of attention given to identity needs. In the next section, I argue that identity needs are deeply entrenched, low in political plasticity, and important factors bringing about deglobalization.

Identity Needs and Deglobalization

Globalization involves the group size becoming larger and larger until, in the ideal, it encompasses all humanity. The ideal end result is individuals

identifying humanity as their superordinate ingroup. However, when bipedalism began about five million years ago, we lived for long periods in relatively small hunter-gathering groups, typically numbering 100–300 people. Our social and cognitive skills took shape in this small-group context. On the basis of evolutionary studies, Robin Dunbar argues "that 150 may be a functional limit on interacting groups even in contemporary Western industrial societies."[42] What has come to be known as 'Dunbar's number' suggests a cognitive limit to the number of relationships individuals can maintain.[43] This has important implications for organizational settings in particular, because when this limit is breached, group cohesion and job satisfaction suffer. In line with this evolutionary perspective, psychological research shows that it is easier for individuals to identify with, and be loyal to, smaller rather than larger groups.[44]

One way in which we cope with this limitation is to organize our lives in small groups, even in the context of very large organizations and collectives. For example, in the twenty-first century most universities consist of tens of thousands (and even hundreds of thousands) of students, and many thousands of faculty and administrative staff. However, the members of each university do not personally know and work with all the other members, only a small subset, typically those of their own department. By organizing the university members in colleges and departments, we make the working unit more manageable in size. Similarly, large business organizations, such as Apple and Facebook, have numerous small departments and units that make it easier for individual employees to develop a sense of belonging and identity. The same happens in cities, which can consist of tens of millions of inhabitants, who achieve a sense of belonging through interactions within smaller districts and neighborhoods.

Although we interact within small groups and there are limits to the number of relationships we can maintain, we also identify with and show loyalty to some very large groups. This is achieved in part through cultural carriers (discussed in Chapters 1, 2, and 8 of this book). For example, Liverpool soccer club serves as a cultural carrier for many inhabitants of Liverpool City, who do not all know one another personally but identify with one another through their support for the Liverpool soccer team.[45]

But the identification of individuals with sports teams, universities, cities, and even nations is still relatively small scale compared to the globalization ideal of identifying with humanity. The pull of local identities is one of the limitations on large-scale change, such as the creation of the European Union, and the even larger-scale example of the creation of a global identity for humanity. Another limitation is the difference between

the maximum speed of change at macroeconomic and macropolitical levels and the micro level of psychological processes.[46] This difference becomes particularly apparent after revolutions, when a revolutionary government comes to power and attempts to implement radical new programs that require major changes in behavior among the people (as discussed in Chapter 8 of this book). A change in regime, constitution, and government policies can take place overnight at the stroke of a pen, but changing the behavior of citizens to be in line with these radical new policies is typically far slower, as successive postrevolution governments have discovered when they have failed to reach their radical goals, such as collectivization.

Among the factors limiting globalization are the relatively slow pace of change at the psychological level and the pull of local identities, associated with smaller groups that allow for more intimate relationships and direct contact. These factors have led to *fractured globalization*, with identity needs and allegiances pulling in a local direction but political and economic institutions and forces pushing to create larger units, such as the European Union, and fueling globalization.[47] Fractured globalization and the pull of local identities are at the heart of the deglobalization movement.

Deglobalization and the pull back to the local level and smaller groups is deeply influenced by identity needs. Economic integration is pushing us to the global, but identity allegiances to the local level persist and create an irrational resistance to fuller global integration – irrational in the sense that in theory free trade, free movement of labor, and free movement of capital will bring material benefits to all the world. But the economic benefits of globalization do not overcome the serious identity threats associated with the global village. For example, the free movement of labor involves the arrival of dissimilar others (as immigrants, refugees, temporary workers, etc.), who pose threats to 'our way of life,' our religion and values, our language, and our identity.

The threats associated with globalization have opened the door for authoritarian strongmen to come to power in a number of countries, including the United States. Of course, authoritarian strongmen continue to rule as dictators in traditional dictatorships, such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. But the new trend at the start of the twenty-first century is the rise of authoritarian strongmen in countries that were making some progress toward democracy, such as Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey, and countries that were considered to have made solid progress toward democracy, such as Narendra Modi in India and Donald Trump in the United States. We can add to this list populist leaders such Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom, Jimmie Akesson of

Sweden, and Giorgia Meloni of Italy. The rise of all these leaders has been helped by threats associated with globalization, and particularly the threat of 'invasions' by large number of 'dissimilar others.' Brexit is a highly visible reaction to this threat, another example being the physical wall that Trump tried to build to 'keep out illegals.'

Authoritarian strongmen, from Trump of the United States to Putin of Russia and Xi of China, have also reacted against globalization by propagating a different kind of freedom, one that is based on the collective rather than the individual. The traditional liberal conception of freedom that was being spread around the world through globalization is individual-based. I term this *detached freedom*,[48] because it presents freedom as involving human rights and freedoms for independent individuals. But authoritarian strongmen advocate *attached freedom*, which rejects individual human rights and freedoms but involves the individual feeling free through submersion into the collective and the glory and success of the group. This is the 'great leader' telling his adoring followers that he alone can save them, he alone can lead their group to glory, he alone can resurrect their powers, he alone can make Germany, America, Russia, China … great again.

In this way, the message of the authoritarian strongman carries with it strong themes of threat but also shining promises of future collective glory under his leadership. Threats are from those 'others' who are dissimilar from us – and the nature of the dissimilar others varies across different societies. For Trump in America the threat is from Mexicans and Muslims, for Khomeini in Iran the threat is from Western culture and liberal values, particularly liberated women. These threats can be overcome only through the authoritarian strongman's leadership, with individuals melting into the collective and doing his will.

In summary, the rise of authoritarian strongmen and the deglobalization movement is influenced by rigidities in political plasticity. These are psychological limiting factors inhibiting change toward the democratic global village.

Concluding Comment

The globalization movement seemed to defy political plasticity, forcing behavioral change even in domains such as ethnicity, nationalism, and religion. It seemed we would all end up in a global village, identifying with humanity as our superordinate common group. The momentum and power of globalization seemed to make the global village inevitable, particularly as reflected in the evolving global youth culture.

But the limits of political plasticity have been demonstrated by the deglobalization movement, which has emerged as a widespread backlash against globalization. Enormous changes continue to take place around the globe, but in a fragmented manner. The push of economic and political forces toward global integration are resisted, sidetracked, and pushed back by identity needs that give priority to the distinctiveness of smaller, local groups. This is associated with the radical rejection of 'the dissimilar other,' whether it be by Khomeini and his fanatical Muslim supporters rejecting Westernization, or Donald Trump and his authoritarian supporters rejecting Mexicans and Muslims and other outsiders 'invading' America, or extremist right-wing nationalists in Europe (such as Marie le Pen, the French politician) rejecting immigrants and refugees.

PART III

Looking Ahead

CHAPTER 12

The Eternal Dictator and Political Plasticity

Sometimes we receive advice that proves to be not only absolutely wrong but also dangerous because it blinds us to upcoming disasters. Three such experiences stand out for me, with regard to advice I received about different world leaders. The first piece of advice was given to me in 1978, just before the revolution that swept the last dictator shah of Iran from power and opened the door for Ayatollah Khomeini (1900–1989) to return from exile abroad and become the next dictator in Iran. I was returning from England to Iran at that time and this advice gave me a false sense of hope about Khomeini:

> Don't worry about Khomeini. After he gets back to Iran, he'll retire to the holy city of Ghom and keep himself busy with theological debates in seminaries. Khomeini won't get mixed up in politics. He's not interested in earthly power.

Within a year of returning to Iran in 1979, Khomeini had decimated all prodemocracy groups and individuals, concentrated absolute power in his own blood-stained hands, and established a corrupt and ferocious dictatorship that still continues to rule Iran through extreme repression.

The next bit of advice that seemed innocuous at the time but proved to be lethally wrong was given to me in 2013, when Xi Jinping became the president of China:

> As the Chinese middle-class grows, China will inevitably transform into a democracy. Xi was selected to lead China into a new democratic era. He is the right man for this job. You'll see how under Xi, freedoms in China will flourish.

Over the next decade, Xi crushed democratic groups in Hong Kong, throttled possible internal rivals, reinstated repression throughout China, threatened Taiwan, and declared himself president for life. As Elizabeth Economy has insightfully argued,

> What makes Xi's revolution distinctive is the strategy he has pursued: the dramatic centralization of authority under his personal leadership; the intensified penetration of society by the state; the creation of a virtual wall of regulations and restrictions that more tightly controls the flow of ideas, culture, and capital into and out of the country, and the significant projection of Chinese power.[1]

I received a third piece of advice in 2019 that proved to be utterly naïve and incorrect about another antidemocracy leader, the would-be dictator Donald Trump.

> Trump has lost the presidential election and that is the end of that sad chapter in American history. He won't try anything now. He'll disappear from the scene and we won't hear from him again in American politics.

But after losing the 2020 US presidential election, Trump almost succeeded in sabotaging the peaceful transition of power by rallying his supporters to violently attack Capitol Hill on January 6, 2021, to prevent the electoral college votes from being counted. Trump continues to repeat the fraudulent claim that the 2020 US presidential election was 'stolen' and he still refuses to accept defeat.[2] He continues to act as king-maker in the Republican Party and has amassed a war chest of hundreds of millions of dollars to use in his ongoing political campaign, looking forward to the 2024 US presidential election, and beyond.

Common to these three dangerous and flatly wrong pieces of advice I received about Khomeini, Xi, and Trump is a lack of understanding about the dictator's (or would-be dictator's) mind, as well as the long history and continued presence of authoritarian strongmen in human societies. This shallow understanding is coupled with the lack of research attention, reflected in part by the absence of psychological research on this highly important topic.[3] It is noteworthy that very few psychologists have given attention to the psychological foundations of dictatorship and the personality characteristics of actual and would-be dictators.[4] Associated with this neglect is a naïve optimism and a tragic lack of awareness of the serious danger that open societies face from individuals who have the personality characteristics of dictators and who can – and sometimes do – influence societies to move backward to become closed, changing democracies to dictatorships.

From the collapse of Athenian democracy 2,500 years ago to the failure of prodemocracy revolutions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, history has provided repeated examples of antidictatorship revolutions leading to new dictatorships and even democracies collapsing and returning to

dictatorship.[5] We need to constantly remind ourselves of the insight provided by John Adams (1735–1826), second president of the United States, that throughout history all democracies have committed suicide.[6] Even in societies such as the United States that have made some (albeit inadequate) progress toward actualized democracy, there persists the possibility that the springboard to dictatorship will come to life (with the help of an antidemocracy leader, such as Hitler in the early 1930s) and be used by a potential dictator to spring to absolute power.

The continued presence in every human society of individuals who in terms of personality characteristics are potential dictators serves as an important limitation on political plasticity. There are Donald Trumps in every democracy, ready to try to move society backward to create a dictatorship – just as there are Vladimir Putins and Ruhollah Khomeinis in every dictatorship, ready to reestablish dictatorship under a different guise after a revolution has toppled the last dictator (as happened in Iran in 1979 and Russia in 1990). It is important that we pay close attention to these potential dictators, because they are an ever-present danger to democracy and freedom throughout human history. The presence of these individuals is an important limiting factor on political plasticity and on how fast and how much societies can change toward actualized democracy.

In Chapter 3 I discussed the larger historical context in which dictatorial leadership emerges. I continue this discussion in the next section of this chapter, where I examine the context in which we need to understand the dictator's mind. Next, I assess the psychological characteristics of the dictator's mind. The minds of potential and actual dictators have a particular set of psychological characteristics that tend to be consistent across cultures (and to some extent also across time[7]).

The Dictator's Mind in Historical Context

The dictator's mind evolved over very long time periods, and particularly from about 10,000 years ago since the development of a *surplus*, an excess of production that enabled societies to become materially richer (discussed in Chapter 3 of this book).[8] But the increase in societal wealth was also associated with greater inequalities, as some individuals and groups remained relatively poor and powerless while others accumulated relatively enormous wealth and power. In this context of evolving inequalities, strongman leaders emerged with titles such as chief, king, and emperor to rule increasingly large and sophisticated human settlements and regions. Strongman leaders protected their positions by building up military and

security forces, as well as by propagating ideologies, such as the 'divine right of kings,' that served to justify their rule, often on a religious basis.

In this historical context, strong authoritarian leaders emerged as dictators with legitimizing ideologies (this relates to the earlier discussion about the rich and the poor, in Chapter 2 of this book) and minds suitable for dictatorial rule.[9] The dictator's mind evolved over thousands of years, under emergent conditions where the high level of control of the leader over resources resulted in the position of the leader becoming increasingly important.[10] By influencing the distribution of resources, having a high level of control over military forces, and collaborating with religious leaders (and in some cases, serving as the most important religious leader), the dictator came to influence society on all major issues, including law and justice. At the same time the dictator had to be continually hypervigilant about threats and conspiracies against himself, as I discuss in the next section.

The 'primordial' mind of the twenty-first-century authoritarian strongman has to be understood in this evolutionary context, as well as in relation to the springboard to dictatorship,[11] which provides the enabling conditions for the would-be dictator to spring to absolute power. The twenty-first century is proving to be a time when the springboard to dictatorship is taking shape in different societies, creating new opportunities for potential dictators to spring to power. This is against expectations and received wisdom, as we were not supposed to witness a new age of dictatorship in the twenty-first century. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in euphoria in Western societies, since it seemed that the 'end of history' had arrived and capitalist democracies had triumphed over communist dictatorships.[12] It was assumed that the countries of the failed Soviet Union, including Russia, would become democracies. Similarly, China would be transformed to a more open society, shaped by strong economic ties to Western democracies, as well as the liberal needs of the fast-growing Chinese middle class. These trends would be in line with, and helped by, the rising economic and political strengths of the giant developing democracies of India and Brazil. The gigantic geographical and population size of India and Brazil seemed to add to the momentum of movement supportive of capitalist democracies. But these hopeful expectations proved to be utterly wrong.

Enormous changes have been taking place in societies across the world in the twenty-first century, but in an anti- rather than a prodemocracy direction. Russia did not change to become a democracy after the fall of the Soviet Union; it continues as a threatening and highly aggressive

dictatorship under Tsar Putin – as witnessed by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Perhaps this trend was set when the decision as to what would come after the Soviet Union was made by a tiny handful of men in Russia, without any meaningful input from the hundreds of millions of ordinary people living in the collapsing Soviet Union. China has not become a more open society and the Chinese middle class has not opened the door to liberalism in China; on the contrary, it has moved further away from democracy, toward an absolute dictatorship under Emperor Xi in the twenty-first century. The giant developing countries of India and Brazil have not helped strengthen democratization around the world. Instead, authoritarian strongmen and their violent, ethnocentric followers have moved India and Brazil toward a dark, ethnocentric nationalism.

Reports from independent sources such as Freedom House, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute, and Journalists without Borders are highlighting a clear trend: Democracy and the open society are under attack and becoming weaker around the world. The situation is summed up by the title of a recent independent report: *Democracy under Siege*.[13] Democracies evolved in part by imposing constraints, through institutions and constitutions, on leadership.[14] In the most-well-developed democracies, such as found in the Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, and Switzerland, constraints on leadership are strong and there is less likelihood of a rogue authoritarian strongman emerging – as in the case of Donald Trump in the United States and Narendra Modi in India, who both thrive on stirring up intergroup conflicts and mobilizing extreme right-wing nationalism. Institutional and constitutional constraints have not proved to be strong enough in the United States, India, and some other democracies, allowing for authoritarian strongmen to mobilize populist support for antidemocratic actions and thus adding momentum to the antidemocratic changes taking place.

In order to support and save democracy, it is essential that we better understand the mind of the men who lead this antidemocratic charge.

Characteristics of the Dictator's Mind

Dictators and would-be dictators make decisions that the rest of us find puzzling, even perhaps incomprehensible. Idi Amin (1925–2003), dictator of Uganda from 1971 to 1979, declared himself the King of Scotland. The Chinese dictator Xi released a white paper in December 2021 declaring China to be a 'democracy that works' with freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and all other democratic freedoms, even though this claim is

farcical. Just as strangely, in the same year Xi forced the Chinese tennis player Peng Shuai to deny making accusations of sexual assault against former vice-premier Zhang Gaoli, even though this was seen around the world as an obviously coerced denial. Khomeini dismissed economics as being for donkeys, and after the 1979 revolution he rejected Iranian experts with advanced degrees as having corrupted minds – even though expert advice is badly needed in Iran. Donald Trump went on live television in 2020 to propose that people should inject themselves with disinfectant as a solution to COVID-19 – advice that could kill people. Putin put on a presidential election in 2021, even though this was an extraordinarily corrupt election, with blatant and open ballet stuffing and the main opposition leaders either in jail or in exile. Why did Putin bother? Hitler knew about Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812, yet in 1941 he made exactly the same mistake and invaded Russia – to be defeated in the same way by the Russian winter. What was Hitler thinking? In 2021 Kim Jong-Un banned laughing and birthdays for eleven days in North Korea. But why? (It was actually to commemorate the ten-year anniversary of the death of Kim Jong Il, Kim Jong-Un's father – who had inherited the dictatorship from his father and passed it on to his son.) The list of puzzling decisions by dictators and would-be dictators is endless. In order to better understand dictators, we need to identify the main underlying psychological characteristics of the dictator's mind.

The dictator's mind reflects deep instinctual insights into how he should behave in order to lure adoring crowds to follow and obey him and to vilify and destroy those who defy and oppose him. The potential or actual dictator has an instinctive sense of how to communicate with the masses, a sense that is misunderstood by elites. Cultural and scientific elites will mock the dictator for being crude, speaking in simplistic language, lacking sophistication, but the dictator has a sixth sense of how to connect to the adoring masses who will do his bidding and muzzle his critics. Like a primitive reptile that is driven by basic instincts, the dictator acts on how he feels, what his gut tells him to do – and he is greedy for absolute power, control, and domination in the twenty-first century.

At the core of the dictator's personality and cognitive style is self-love and self-centeredness. We all exhibit some level of self-centeredness, self-concern, and even vanity, and this contributes to normal self-worth and positive self-image. However, the dictator is a pathological narcissist,[15] with a grossly inflated sense of his own importance, brilliance, uniqueness, and infallibility. Related to this, the dictator's mind is guided by certainties, dogmatism, and categorical thinking. Ambiguities are shunned, as the

dictator is convinced he knows exactly what is right and what is wrong, how everyone should live, and which people are good and which are bad. Given that the dictator is the center of the universe and is infallible in recognizing right and wrong, good and bad, it is natural that the dictator also knows everything better than everyone else.

The dictator's "I know everything" fallacy has many detrimental consequences for society, including the dictator dismissing science and scientists because he knows better. A classic example is Stalin, who saw himself as the "choirmaster of science"[16] – in practice, Stalin's interferences hindered scientific progress in the Soviet Union and brought about hugely costly setbacks in agriculture and industry, as well as universities. I witnessed the same antiscience position taken by Khomeini and his followers in Iran; the Islamic regime closed down universities for several years during the so-called 'cultural revolution' in the early 1980s and continues to restrict and censor objective research in the twenty-first century. The same antiscience bias is shown by Trump and his supporters who, nevertheless, have tried to use the credibility of science to spread misinformation.[17]

Given that the dictator is all-knowing, it is natural that he should also be all-powerful. The dictator is instinctively against power-sharing. That is why in dictatorships even when decision-making is supposed to be through collectives or committees of different types, in practice a single authoritarian male makes the decisions. For example, after the 1917 revolution in Russia, Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) and then Joseph Stalin (1878–1953) became all-powerful dictators, and since 2000 Vladimir Putin has followed the same leadership tradition in Russia. The same disinclination to share power was shown by Donald Trump in his efforts on January 6, 2021, to prevent the peaceful transition of power to the next democratically elected president of the United States. In Iran, Khomeini took this 'absolute power in the hands of an absolute dictator' even further by forcing the ratification of a constitution that enshrines this principle (through the *velayat-e faghih,* discussed in Chapter 4 of this book).

But even when the dictator has crushed opposition and grabbed absolute power, he continually sees conspiracies against himself. He projects his own fears and motives onto others. The dictator is a conspiratorial thinker who sees danger in any sign of disagreement with his views.

The essence of all relationships between the dictator and others is *subjugation*, the need to dominate and control. This is best explained in relation to Machiavellianism, a manipulative, deceptive, detached, and amoral personality.[18] Dictators are particularly high on two features of Machiavellianism: first, the perception that the world is a dangerous place

where you have to get the other guy before he finds the opportunity to get you – because he *does* intend to get you; second, the belief that 'the ends justify the means,' so you must use whatever methods necessary to grab and keep power.

The need to subjugate, together with high Machiavellianism, shapes the dictator's relationships with other people, including women. Dictators require women to play subordinate, submissive roles. At the collective level, dictators attract the support of women who desire men who are controlling, strong, aggressive, and domineering.

The dictator is driven to achieve control, to be in command in every way, but he has the illusion of control even when it is not achieved. This accounts for the often-grandiose declarations of even petty dictators from minor dictatorships, announcing that they will 'level to the ground and utterly destroy America' or some other major power. The need for control is coupled with emotional distancing from, and lack of empathy with, ordinary people and events. Distancing enables the dictator to remain aloof, untainted by events, with himself as the untouched center of the universe. Of course, anything that goes wrong is the responsibility of others, not the dictator. This brings to mind the image of Hitler in the last months of World War II, urging young boys and old men to continue defending Berlin and blaming the German people for 'betraying him,' rather than taking personal responsibility for the catastrophic tragedies he caused.[19]

The most distinct and mysterious characteristic of the dictator's mind is an astounding sensitivity to, and understanding of, the adoring masses who surround him. Again and again we witness the same pattern across different societies and across time, with the cultural and scientific elite scorning and looking down at the dictator as a 'simpleton,' as unsophisticated, as someone who can hardly put a few sentences together correctly, but many ordinary people being charmed, captivated, mesmerized by him. I witnessed this pattern of reactions to Khomeini in Iran and to the would-be dictator Trump in the United States. Like other dictators or would-be dictators, Khomeini and Trump displayed an uncanny understanding of their populist following and showed disdain for, and were disdained by, the cultural and scientific elites.

Crisis Incidents and the Springboard to Dictatorship

In terms of cognitive and personality characteristics, then, there are would-be or potential dictators in all societies. What enables a would-be dictator to spring to power to become an actual dictator is the availability of the

springboard to dictatorship. But would-be dictators are not passive or powerless in relation to the springboard to dictatorship; they can take measures to manufacture and activate this springboard. For example, an essential ingredient of the springboard to dictatorship is a crisis incident, disruptive enough to create an emergency situation and allow the would-be dictator to declare martial law, end civil liberties, and bring all opposition groups under his control. (As discussed in Chapter 3 of this book, the idea of all powers being concentrated in the hands of a single strong leader in times of crisis seems functional from an evolutionary perspective. Particularly when a group is under attack and decisions that could determine survival have to be made rapidly, groups that had strong centralized leadership capable of speedy decisions and actions would be at an advantage.)

In the following examples of crisis incidents, there is some ambiguity about the role of the incoming dictator. What role did Hitler, Khomeini, and Putin play in bringing about the crisis incidents that helped bring them to grab power? Similarly, what role did Trump play in instigating the January 6, 2021, attempt to prevent the peaceful transition of power to the Biden administration? But there is no ambiguity in that Hitler, Khomeini, and Putin benefitted from the crisis incident that eventually gave them absolute power, and Trump would have been the main beneficiary of the January 6, 2021, coup attempt if it had been successful.

Hitler used the fire on February 27, 1933, at the Reichstag (the meeting place of the lower house of Germany's national legislature) in Berlin as his crisis incident. The fire destroyed the main assembly hall of the Reichstag. Police and firefighters found the self-confessed arsonist at the scene: Marinus van der Lubbe, a Dutch communist, was tried, convicted, and executed. Hitler and other Nazi leaders declared the fire to be a communist plot to take over Germany. Almost immediately, President Paul von Hindenberg signed an emergency decree that ended civil liberties in Germany. Although to this day there is controversy about who started the Reichstag fire,[20] there is no doubt that it was Hitler and the Nazis who benefitted from this crisis. Following the fire, Hitler created an absolute dictatorship that lasted until the end of World War II.

Khomeini used the invasion of the US Embassy in Tehran, which lasted from November 4, 1979, until January 20, 1981, as the crisis incident that enabled him to grab absolute power. More than fifty US diplomats were taken as hostages for 444 days, by radical student followers of Khomeini. I was teaching in universities in Tehran at the time, and believe this hostage-taking was opportunistic. A number of different embassies were attacked at that time, but it was the US embassy that was the prime target for the

students. Khomeini seized the opportunity to use the hostage-taking crisis to sideline and crush his political competitors. Political leaders, such as Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan (1907–1995), saw the hostage-taking as too radical and felt forced to resign or were pushed out. The end result was that at the start of the hostage-taking incident, Khomeini was surrounded by politically active and powerful individuals and groups who opposed and restricted his actions. When the hostage-taking crisis ended and the diplomats were returned to the United States, all of Khomeini's major political competitors had been wiped out. Whatever opposition to Khomeini remained was destroyed during the 1980–1988 Iran–Iraq War, which Khomeini extended because the lengthy war suited his political goals. The political opposition to Khomeini were more easily branded as 'un-Islamic traitors' during wartime.

Putin manufactured a crisis incident in September 1999, when there were a series of apartment bombings in Moscow. The administration of President Boris Yeltsin (1931–2007) blamed Chechen militants and launched a full-scale invasion of Chechnya. Putin was not a well-known national figure at that time, but the apartment bombings and the Chechnyan war enabled him to grab the national spotlight as the leader of the fight against the 'Islamic external enemy.' He used the opportunity to spring to power from an underdog position. After becoming president in 2000 with Yeltsin's help, Putin immediately granted Yeltsin a pardon and immunity from prosecution for any actions he undertook while in office. This was necessary for Yeltsin, because there were serious corruption allegations against him. Putin has remained in dictatorial power since 2000, even though there continue to be serious questions about the role of Russian government security forces in the 1999 apartment bombings that created the key political opportunity for him.[21]

Donald Trump attempted to use the invasion of Capitol Hill by his supporters on January 6, 2021, to create a crisis incident that would prevent the peaceful transmission of presidential power to Joe Biden. On that day a joint session of the US Congress was set to convene to certify Biden's electoral vote win to become the forty-sixth president of the United States. Trump urged Vice-President Mike Pence, who also served as the president of the US Senate, to reject Biden's win. Pence refused to comply. Trump's supporters stormed Capitol Hill and attempted to prevent the counting and certification of the electoral college votes. Trump did not manage to create a large enough crisis incident to result in martial law being declared, and some key Republican leaders refused to do his bidding and declare the presidential election of 2020 as stolen. But through his populist rhetoric

and strongman appeal, particularly to extremist white nationalists, Trump has remained a powerful political figure.

Concluding Comment

One of the most important continuities in human history is the persistent presence of individuals with the personality characteristics of dictators. Sometimes the springboard to dictatorship becomes available in a timely way, as it did in the 1920s and 1930s in Italy and Germany, and these individuals spring to power. In other instances, the potential dictator is available, but the springboard does not come to life, as in the case of Donald Trump in 2020.

The continued presence of individuals with dictator personalities places a restriction on political plasticity and is an ever-present danger that could cause societies to move back from democracy to dictatorship. Received wisdom tells us that the best way to defend democracy from dictator personalities is to strengthen formal institutions and the rule of law. The experience of the United States with Donald Trump demonstrates that informal norms and traditions are not enough,[22] because a would-be dictator who disregards government norms and traditions can wreak havoc and weaken democracy – as has Trump (e.g., by telling his group to not comply with congressional subpoenas).

Afterword
Lessons Learned: The Example of Women in Education

What lessons do these discussions of political plasticity provide for the future of democracy and dictatorship? I argue that by attending to political plasticity, we can better identify areas where there is high rigidity in change toward actualized democracy and we need to plan to bring about change through programs that are systematic but also designed to avoid backlash. For example, programs that involve immigration, large-scale importation of dissimilar others, and increased ethnic diversity typically result in backlash and the strengthening of extremist nationalist antidemocracy groups in society. Change in these low political plasticity areas requires special planning, in order to avoid the rise of ethnocentrism and authoritarian strongmen. But there are also areas of high political plasticity, where change is far more probable and is also likely to have a cascading effect, to bring about liberating transformations in other areas. I discuss women in education as an illustrative case of high political plasticity that is generating prodemocracy change in other domains.

Recognizing and Planning for Low Political Plasticity

The concept of political plasticity has enabled us to highlight and unravel strong continuities in certain areas of human life. These continuities can serve as obstacles on the path to actualized democracy. Illustrative examples of this low political plasticity are the reliance on a single (typically older) male leader as the key decision-maker in society, the chasm between the rich and poor, distinctions (and conflicts) between ethnic groups and religious groups, and the role of the built environment in shaping behavior and sustaining continuity. Revolutions, war, and technology are also assumed to bring about gigantic changes but, again, the sound and fury of surface-level changes often camouflage deeper continuities. I have particularly pointed to the role of language and narratives in distracting us

from the difference between surface-level and deep-level changes and hiding important continuities that persist over very long time periods. In a number of important areas, human behavior has low political plasticity and change takes place very slowly, if at all, over hundreds and sometimes thousands of years.

Throughout the earlier chapters in this book I have highlighted the importance of change at different levels. For example, in discussing revolutions I distinguished between the very common Type 1 revolutions, which bring about a change of regime but not a change of political systems (such as changing the dictator shah for the dictator mullahs in Iran or changing the 'tsar' or 'emperor' for a 'president' or 'party leader' in Russia or China, without changing dictatorship for democracy), and the rare Type 2 revolutions, which bring about a change of regime and a change in political systems (for instance, changing both who rules and the form of government). A more general example is the distinction between surface-level and deep-level changes, when superficial changes take place (e.g., language used in referring to people and the titles of officials), but at a deeper level authority relations and resource inequalities do not change or sometimes become even more unequal. These continuities underlie the puzzling popular support for authoritarian strongmen in the twenty-first century.

Donald Trump's well-publicized record shows that he cheated as a student in university examinations, followed business strategies that were racist and also in many cases predatory, as US president he came on live television to tell viewers they should inject themselves with disinfectant to cure COVID-19, and gave tax breaks biased in favor of the super-rich. Despite all this, in the 2020 US presidential elections, he got backing from well over seventy million voters, many of them materially poor. In order to better understand the popularity of authoritarian strongmen such as Trump, we need to look at very-long-term processes and limitations to political plasticity. Authoritarian strongmen appeal to the deeply felt identity needs of large numbers of individuals,[1] needs that have long historical roots and are not changed without highly engaging and long-term programs of mass civic education.

Thus, a first important lesson from our discussions is that in planning for progress, we must distinguish between surface-level and deep-level changes. Particularly in areas of low political plasticity, such as leader–follower relations, it is easy to mistake surface-level changes for deep progress. Only serious and concerted programs of civic education and engagement will bring about the deep-level changes that get us closer to actualized

democracy. This requires the mobilization of the entire education system and leadership focused on using education to nurture democratic citizens with the necessary psychological characteristics.[2]

A second lesson from our discussions is that we must look for areas where political plasticity is relatively high and take steps to bring about progress *through those areas*. An example I turn to next is that of women in education and the societal transformation that can result from changes in the role of women.

Women as Transformative

The end of men: And the rise of women, the title of Hanna Rosin's influential book,[3] reflects the dramatic changes taking place in popular conceptions of the role and status of women in relation to men. Since the dawn of humankind, men have been the dominant sex in the larger society, and also the sex preferred by most parents. But now there is widespread discussion about how boys are falling behind in school, female students are outperforming male students, and men are in decline at work, feeling lost, and slipping down from their dominant position overall.[4] Are these changes imaginary or are they actually taking place?

I argue that the changed role of women in the larger society has been motored by the tremendous success of women in education. Until relatively recently, the scientific viewpoint was that women should not be allowed to enter higher education, because (purportedly) they are not born with the ability to compete with men in advanced studies. Yet in the twenty-first century, we find that women have made rapid progress in education and there is now concern about *males falling behind*. This dramatic change has taken place in countries as different as the United States and Iran and resulted in a need for explanations of the "worldwide boom in higher education of women."[5]

I have experienced this shift at my own university over the course of my working life. When I joined my university department in 1990, only two out of the fifteen faculty were female. It was extremely difficult at that time for women to have a successful academic career and a family. But now in the 2020s, male faculty are a small minority in my department, and the norm is for the majority female faculty to both successfully advance in their careers and have families. The majority of our doctoral students are also female. My academic department is a microcosm of the changes taking place in education throughout the world.

In reviewing the advances of women in education, I begin with a small reminder of the position of many scientists on the topic of sex differences. I conclude by considering how the low political plasticity of gender roles can be used to generate larger changes in society.

Women's Advances in Education

> In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, craniologists tried to account for sex differences in intellectual achievement by measuring the skull. Anatomists asserted that the larger male skull held a heavier and more powerful brain. In the mid-nineteenth century, social Darwinists invoked evolutionary biology to argue that a woman was a man whose evolution – both physical and mental – had been arrested in a primitive stage. In this same period, doctors used their authority as scientists to discourage women's attempts to gain access to higher education. Women's intellectual development, it was argued, would proceed only at great cost to reproductive development. As the brain develops, so the logic went, the ovaries shrivel.[6]

As Londa Schiebinger (quoted above) has pointed out, over the centuries a variety of arguments supposedly based on science were put forward to justify the exclusion of women from higher education. The history of psychology is also replete with examples of (supposed) objective evidence that purportedly shows the inferiority of the female brain.[7] On the same basis, women were also excluded from joining scientific associations; the Royal Society was founded in England in 1660, but women were not allowed to join as members until 1945. Women were similarly excluded from the Russian National Academy until 1939, the American National Academy of Sciences until 1925, and the French Académie des Sciences until 1962 (!). The great Polish-French scientist Marie Curie (1867–1934) won her second Nobel prize in 1911, but in that year her application to become a member of the French Académie des Sciences was rejected.

Until the post–World War II era, women were widely excluded from higher education. This exclusion was on a political rather than a scientific basis, and so there needed to be changes in the political conditions in order for women to gain access to higher education. The gradual opening up of higher education institutions to women came through political pressures, associated with the women's liberation movement and the higher participation of women in political and economic spheres. From the late nineteenth century, there was a sharp rise in the participation of women in work outside the home, and by the early twenty-first century 60–80 percent of women worked outside the home in the thirty-eight OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.[8]

Of course, the advances of women in education and in the labor force reinforced one another, so that as women gained more advanced education they were more competitive in the labor force, and as they progressed at work each generation of women gained greater access to higher education for the next generation of women.

The advancement of women in education from the late twentieth century has been truly astonishing. In a study of educational advancement in 120 countries, Gary Becker and his associates found that from 1970 to 2010, the percentage of persons thirty to thirty-four years old with university education increased from three to eleven in low-income countries and from twelve to twenty-seven in high-income countries.[9] As these researchers report, "Even more remarkable than the breadth and magnitude of this boom in higher education is how it is coming about: most of the growth in higher education is due to women, so much so that in most countries, women have not only matched but surpassed men in college attainment."[10] Reports from UN organizations monitoring changes in international education also show this same trend, with women catching up with, and in many cases outperforming, men in education.[11] "In the United States in the 1970s, male college graduates outnumbered female college graduates 3 to 2; today, the ratio is reversed."[12]

Research suggests that behind the progress made by women in education and their higher test scores are also changes in values and educational expectations. Whereas traditional values and psychological outlook led to expectations that women would give priority to marriage, children, and the family, particularly after the 1960s the expectation was that women would give priority to success in higher education and professional careers outside the home. These changes in educational and career expectations particularly impacted teenage girls.[13] In line with this, a study of adolescent boys and girls in fifty national education systems involved with TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) found that in forty-four out of the fifty education systems girls have higher expectations of attaining higher education than boys.[14] Strikingly, then, the same trend of girls generally doing better than boys is being reported in both high- and low-income societies.[15] The presence of this trend around the world in part reflects the impact of globalization.[16]

These educational trends showing girls outperforming boys have resulted in a wide discussion about 'boys falling behind' in the mass media, as well in as academic circles. Books with mass market appeal have been published, with titles such as *The war against boys: How misguided policies are harming our young men* and *The boy crisis: Why boys are struggling and what*

we can do about it (with discussions on topics such as 'sorry, it's a boy').[17] A simplistic explanation is that whereas before there was a bias against girls in education, there is now a bias against boys. But we need to reach a more multifaceted and more comprehensive explanation.

It is useful to seek an explanation for the success of women in education by looking at not only Western but also non-Western societies. For example, there has been a dramatic increase in women's performance in education in Iran,[18] so that there are now more females than males in undergraduate programs at Iranian universities. In my experience of teaching in postrevolution Iran, the explanation for why Iranian women are doing so well in education is that this is the only avenue open to them to compete and do well. In every other avenue, including in employment outside the home, there are enormous legal, political, and cultural barriers used by the mullahs and their authoritarian supporters to prevent women from making progress. In short, in Iran women graduate from universities at higher numbers than men, but they are not given job opportunities. In the field of education, the biases against women are fewer (although they are still present!).

The performances of girls and boys in many other Muslim countries correspond to the Iranian experience. According to a report in *The Economist*, in Arab countries girls are less likely to be sent to school than boys, "but in the classroom girls vastly outperform their male peers – to a degree unmatched anywhere else in the world … Shoddy boys schools are turning out insecure young men who are more likely to feel that their livelihoods depend on keeping better-educated women out of work."[19] This matches my experience in postrevolution Iran, where educated progressive women are the targets of extreme prejudice from the mullahs and their supporters, who are typically males with low education. Iran ranks 150th (out of 156) in the Global Gender Gap Index,[20] and it is this third-class status given to Iranian women by the mullah regime that prevents them from being able to use their higher education achievements to the benefit of themselves and the larger Iranian society.

The advancement of women in education in the Islamic world helps us to reflect back on the situation in Western societies and around the world. Women have advanced in education around the world for the same reasons that they have advanced in Islamic societies: Education is the domain that offers them the most level playing field to compete against men. The mass testing system used in the West, particularly in the United States, has been exported to many non-Western societies. In this testing system, all individuals take the same standardized tests, answer the same test questions,

and are assessed using the same criteria. Mass testing commonly involves machine scoring. Women have a better chance of being treated equally in this system, and they have jumped at the opportunity and excelled. In societies where the laws have been reformed so that women no longer face discrimination in employment, success in education has led to success in jobs and this has helped the whole economy to grow.[21]

Looking Ahead

Of course, the success of women in education has not resulted in a world in which there is gender parity. First, women are still internationally underrepresented in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.[22] Second, women are still confronted by the glass ceiling in a number of important domains, particularly in politics and business.[23] But the success of women in education has opened up tremendous possibilities for change. This is because of the central role women play in the family.

The advancement of women in education changes their role in the family, even if they do not work outside the home. More educated women can play a different, more enriching role in the socialization and education of children. Their status in the family is enhanced by their more advanced education, and the role model they present to their daughters and sons is changed. The major schools of psychology, including behaviorism, psychoanalysis, humanistic psychology, Gestalt psychology, and cognitive psychology, have foundational differences, but they all agree in the importance of family dynamics and early childhood experiences in shaping adult behavior. The changed role of women in the family through higher education not only changes the family dynamics for the present but also transforms the future psychological citizens emerging from the family.

Two other consequences of women's success in education are noteworthy. The first concerns the ongoing challenge of overpopulation in the world. With limited arable land, drinkable water, and other resources necessary for survival, in this era of global warming we continue to face what Paul Ehrlich accurately calls *The Population Bomb*.[24] One of the consequences of women entering higher education is a delay in the birth of the first child and a decrease in the total fertility rate.[25] In this way, greater resources can be invested in each child because there will be fewer children, and we have a greater chance of escaping the 'population bomb.'

A second important consequence of women's success in education arises from the method of this success and the lesson it provides for other minority movements. Women have succeeded in education by demanding

equality of opportunity and a level playing field, not by 'celebrating their differences,' positioning themselves as different from men, and demanding that they be assessed using a different set of criteria. Women have competed with men on the standard educational tests and demonstrated that they are just as good – and in some respects better. In essence, women have given priority to human commonalities, not differences. This is in line with omniculturalism, which gives priority to the characteristics that all humans share, and not multiculturalism, which celebrates differences across human groups.[26] The path followed by women in education is an important example for other minority movements.

Concluding Comment

Progress toward more democratic societies has been extremely bumpy and even hazardous, because it has sometimes involved movement backward toward dictatorship. By taking into consideration political plasticity in different domains, we can better plan for democratic changes. Political plasticity is extremely low in some domains, and we need to plan for incremental change. But in other domains, political plasticity is higher and there is potential for bringing about cascading transformations in society. The area of women in education is high in political plasticity, and it is motoring changes in the role of women more broadly. In many important respects, the future of progress in democracy is dependent on the future of women.

Notes

Preface

1 Much of the discussion on deglobalization by Walden Bello (2004) and others has focused on economic processes, but as becomes clear my focus is more on identity needs and psychological processes.

1 Political Plasticity, the Key to Understanding the Future of Democracy and Dictatorship

1 The pervasive nature of dictatorial authority, with the dictator having the final say on every subject, is also noted in the context of China; see *The Economist* (2021, p. 34).
2 Woodward & Costa (2021) provide an entertaining account of events around the January 6, 2021, coup attempt.
3 Psychologists have given some attention to populism; see readings in Forgas, Crano, & Fiedler (2021).
4 Berg (2020).
5 There is a vast research literature demonstrating continued racial bias against African Americans in the United States. The report by Horowitz, Brown, & Cox (2019) is of particular value.
6 Anderson (2018).
7 Much of the research on plasticity explores neuroplasticity (Costandi, 2016).
8 Political plasticity is given some attention in Moghaddam (2019).
9 There is some discussion of the 'global roots' of democracy (see Sen, 2003), but here I limit my discussion to democracy in the Western form; for an example of the non-Western roots of democracy, see the discussion in chapter 10 on 'contextualized democracy' in Moghaddam (2006).
10 Machiavelli gave a great deal of attention to the Florentine Republic and its collapse; see Clarke (2018).
11 Moghaddam (2013, 2016, 2019); Wagoner, Moghaddam, & Valsiner (2018).
12 Moghaddam (2019).
13 Dictatorship and authoritarian 'strongman' leadership have support from some factions of the population, particularly those who fit the pattern of the authoritarian personality (Altemeyer, 1988; Moghaddam, 2013).

14 Moghaddam (2016, p. 4).
15 Allemand, Zimprich, & Martin (2008).
16 Green & Daniels (2020).
17 Shadbolt & Hampson (2019) provide a lively discussion of the relationship between technology and human behavior.
18 Xu (2021).
19 Moghaddam (2019).
20 Xu (2021).
21 Hsieh et al. (2011).
22 See Moghaddam (2019) for a critical analysis of the influential 'escape from freedom' thesis put forward by Eric Fromm.
23 Grossi (2017).
24 Moghaddam (2002).
25 For example, see Smith's (2017) highly insightful discussion of attempts by revolutionaries to change everyday behaviors after the Russian Revolution (1917).
26 I say 'so-called' communist societies, because in China and a number of other societies that position themselves as 'communist,' the concentration of wealth and the life of the affluent parallel those of capitalist societies.
27 There has been a rethinking of traditional conceptualizations of modernization, religion, and ethnicity (e.g., see Ammerman, 2020).
28 Moghaddam (2016).
29 O'Brien & Piscopo (2019).

2 Hardwiring inside and outside People

1 Greenfield (2013).
2 Churchland (2002).
3 Other terms that help clarify the meaning of these two extremes are: 'hardwired' versus 'programmable,' 'hardware' versus 'software,' 'unlearned' versus 'learned,' 'present at birth' versus 'acquired after birth,' and 'universal' versus 'culture specific.'
4 For example, see Grossi (2017) and Persson & Savulescu (2017).
5 Bjorklund (2018).
6 Baker et al. (2017).
7 Brandt et al. (2020).
8 Simonton (2018).
9 For example, Westerhof & Keyes (2010) report on findings from a Dutch sample.
10 Schönfeld, Brailovskaia, & Margraf (2017).
11 Lomanowska et al. (2017, p. 120).
12 Moehler, Biringen, & Poustka (2007).
13 McGowan & Roth (2015).
14 For social identity research tradition, see chapter 5 in Moghaddam (2008). For collective identities, see, for example, Smeekes & Verkuyten (2015)

15 Moghaddam (2019).
16 The research of Opie & Opie (2001/1959) on this theme is timeless.
17 Smith (2017, p. 369).
18 Riegel (2005, p. 108).
19 Quoted in Fitzpatrick (2017, p. 99).
20 For examples of this literature, see readings in Feierman & Oviedo (2020).
21 Tumarkin (1981, p. 37).
22 Moghaddam (2002, p. 40).
23 For example, see Strang (2019) for a discussion of the originalist position on the US Constitution.
24 Strang (2019, p. 1).
25 Chemerinsky (2018).
26 For example, see Lang's (2013) discussion of the case of Egypt.
27 Tomba (2017).
28 Fitzpatrick (1994, p. 19).
29 Fitzpatrick (1994, p. 128).
30 Khomeini (1979).
31 Moghaddam (2002).
32 I am aware of the argument that the hejab 'protects' women. First, women would not need such 'protection' when they have equal rights; second, the hejab is a restriction on women that is integral to their subjugation as third-class citizens with unequal rights.
33 Edwards, Gillies, & Horsley (2015).
34 For sex differences, see Franks (2019, pp. 101–105); for sexism, see Jordan-Young & Rumiati (2012).
35 See discussions in van Ooyen & Butz-Ostendorf (2017).
36 Rinke et al. (2018, p. 251).
37 For example, see Pfeifer & Bongard (2007) and Proffitt & Baer's (2020) user-friendly book.
38 Pfeifer & Bongard (2007, p. 2).
39 Lambert (2018, pp. 172–173).
40 Goldstein & Cacciamani (2022).
41 Griffey & Little (2014).
42 Langlois et al. (2000).
43 Ito et al. (2016).
44 Ebner (2008).
45 Weyl (1983).
46 Huang et al. (2018). See also the discussion of the 'social brain' by Atzil et al. (2018), who argue that "[t]he extended developmental course in humans, along with massive neural plasticity, makes brain development susceptible to environmental input" (p. 626).
47 McAndrew (2021).
48 Van Vugt & Hardy (2009).
49 Nkengne et al. (2008).
50 Russell et al. (2019).
51 Moghaddam (2022).

3 Why Do Leaders Still Exist? Leadership and Followership

1 For example, Lewis & Malmgren (2019).
2 For example, Harris et al. (2019) provide a new perspective on spirituality and maturity among leaders.
3 Meng (2020).
4 The argument that the United States is governed by an all-powerful 'imperial' president has been countered by those who claim that public opinion shapes presidential decisions (see Christenson & Kriner, 2020).
5 Roberts (2014, p. 7).
6 For examples of perspectives on leadership, see Spisak (2020) and Van Vugt (2006).
7 The role of leaders in intergroup conflicts is highlighted by many, including Diamond (1997).
8 Van Vugt (2006, p. 356).
9 Von Rueden (2020, p. 167).
10 Garfield & Hagen (2020, p. 1).
11 Bowles & Choi (2013); this study was quickly followed up by others (e.g., Gallagher, Shennan, & Thomas, 2015) arguing that property rights, but not necessarily increased productivity, are necessary for the transition to farming and, eventually, more complex societies with centralized leadership.
12 Mattison et al. (2016) provide a highly useful wide-ranging discussion on this theme.
13 Mayshar, Moav, & Pascali (2020) give central importance to the higher defensibility of cereal grains.
14 Mattison et al. (2016, p. 194).
15 Mattison et al. (2016, p. 195).
16 Weinberger et al. (2020).
17 Peoples, Duda, & Marlowe (2016).
18 Wood & Eagly (2002, 2012).
19 Wood & Eagly (2012, p. 61).
20 For Tiwi, see Hart, Pilling, & Goodale (2001). For Tsimane, see Von Rueden et al. (2014).
21 Bernard (2012).
22 Chagnon (1997) has been criticized for his research mainly on ethical grounds, but I believe there is value in considering his basic message about patterns of group dynamics.
23 Sherif (1966).
24 Lintott (1999).
25 Brown (1991); Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser (2008).
26 Garfield, Syme, & Hagen (2020).
27 Mouton (2019) provides an insightful discussion of Thomas Carlyle's (1795–1881) 'Great Man' theory of history and Leo Tolstoy's (1828–1910) critical assessment and counternarrative.
28 Economy (2018, p. 10).
29 *The Economist* (2021, p. 34).

30 Ruparelia (2019, p. 97).
31 Moghaddam (2019).
32 Couzin (2008, p. 36).
33 Raper (2003).
34 Couzin et al. (2011).
35 Couzin (2008, p. 39).
36 Moscovici, Mugny, & Van Avermaet (1984).
37 Dyer et al. (2008).
38 See chapter 9 and the discussion on democracy without leaders in Lord (2003).
39 Dreesen et al. (2020).
40 Hanzl (2007).
41 Levenda et al. (2020).
42 For examples of smart-city developments, see Cowley, Joss, & Dayot (2018).
43 See discussions in McLaverty (2017).
44 Moore et al. (2019).
45 See Lunenburg (2012) for a discussion of sources of power.
46 Freud (1955, p. 116).
47 Freud (1961, p. 119) asserts that love and hate are always tied together.
48 Freud (1955, pp. 93–94).
49 Freud (1955, pp. 123–124).
50 See Milgram (1974) and Zimbardo (2007).
51 See the discussion of power and corruption, with references to experimental studies, in Moghaddam (2016, pp. 104–105).
52 Whitson et al. (2013).
53 Lopes da Hora & Sampaio (2019) provide an excellent discussion of corruption experiments.
54 See Krishnamurti, Shams, & Velayutham (2018) on corporate corruption in global context.

4 Rich and Poor – Still Just as Different

1 Piketty (2014).
2 Examples are Atkinson (2015) and Dorling (2014).
3 For example, Hammar & Waldenstrom (2020) and Waldenstrom (2021).
4 Saez & Zucman (2019).
5 Oxfam International (2021).
6 Actually, the most expensive yachts now cost over a billion dollars; https://wealthygorilla.com/most-expensive-yachts/
7 Mechanic (2021).
8 Jefferson (2020).
9 Atkinson (2015); Piketty (2014).
10 Goodman (2022).
11 Bratanova et al. (2016).
12 Marmot (2015).

13 Arndt (2020).
14 Piketty (2014).
15 Robeyns et al. (2021).
16 Kohler & Smith (2019).
17 Aries & Duby (1992).
18 Contamine (1988).
19 Duby (1988).
20 Bourguignon & Morrison (2002); Ravallion (2016).
21 Kim (2018b, p. 1).
22 Kohler & Smith (2019).
23 Milanovic (2011).
24 Scheidel (1917, p. 6).
25 Piketty (2014); Anderson (2015).
26 For example, the research of Daniel Waldenstrom and his colleagues does not support the view that free-market capitalism, unfettered by mass mobilization wars, pandemics, progressive taxation, and the like, would inevitably lead to extreme inequalities and wealth concentration. See Hammar & Waldenstrom (2020) and Waldenstrom (2021).
27 Jones (2005).
28 Moghaddam (2000).
29 Paine (1791/2021).
30 Lees (1998).
31 United Nations (2015).
32 Sachs (2012).
33 Dhahri & Omri (2020).
34 Kim (2018a, p. 1427).
35 Barry & Øverland (2016).
36 Berkey (2021).
37 Gans (1995).
38 Santiago (2015).
39 Moghaddam (2022).
40 For example, Rosenbaum (2018).
41 Zuo (2021).
42 Bikales (2021).
43 Hourdequin (2018).
44 Phiri & Abdullahi (2018, p. 99).
45 Dickens (1843/44, p. 1).
46 Research shows that the rich justify their own 'superior' resources and status by adopting more conservative political positions (Page, Bartels, & Seawright, 2013).
47 For example, the Five-Stage Model (Taylor & McKirnan, 1984).
48 Luttig (2013).
49 For examples, see Henry, Wetherell, & Brandt (2015) and Major et al. (2002).
50 Marx did not provide clear definitions of social class or class consciousness (Fantasia, 1995).

51 Jost (2018).
52 Hafer & Bègue, 2005; Lerner (1980).
53 Heiserman & Simpson (2017).
54 Lerner & Simmons (1966).
55 Lerner & Simmons (1966, p. 203).
56 See discussions in Lehmann & Myers (1989).
57 Quoted in Burgess (1992, p. 837).
58 For the early development of this papal role, see Richards (1979).
59 The supreme leader can shape policy in any and all areas, such as foreign policy (see Alam Rizvi, 2012).
60 Peoples, Duda, & Marlowe (2016).
61 Bastos Jr. et al. (2015).
62 Komlos (2018).

5 Ethnicity Is Forever

1 Uvin (1997). See also bbc.com/news/world-africa-26875506
2 Uvin (1997, p. 92).
3 Waters (1995).
4 Fearon & Laitin (2003).
5 Bandarage (2009, p. 201).
6 Hughes (2011).
7 Worchel (2004, p. 292).
8 The pioneering work of Horowitz (1985) is important here.
9 Kaufman (2011, p. 91).
10 Lee et al. (2004).
11 Gat (2012).
12 For Western societies, see Lijphart (1977); for non-Western societies, see Harff & Gurr (2019).
13 Smith (1981).
14 For examples reflecting the ancient roots of ethnicity, see Atkinson (1995) and Waters (1995).
15 For example, see Helms & Talleyrand (1997) and Zagefka (2009).
16 Braun, Wolfgang, & Dickersin (2013).
17 Zuckerman (1990).
18 Learoyd, Douiri, & Hart (2021).
19 Goodyear-Grant & Tolley (2019).
20 Deere, Kanbur, & Stewart (2018).
21 Hadzic, Carlson, & Tavits (2017).
22 Boudreau, Elmendorf, & MacKenzie (2019).
23 Jones (2018, p. 9).
24 Salter (2008, p. 41).
25 Worchel (1999).
26 Varshney (2007, pp. 282–285).

27 Kaufman (2011).
28 See readings in Kelley & Lewis (2000).
29 Heyer et al. (2009).
30 Salter (2008).
31 Dawkins (1989).
32 Van den Berghe (1981).
33 Mersha & Beck (2020, p. 2).
34 Braun (2002).
35 Manica, Prugnolle, & Balloux (2005); also, see Whaley (2003).
36 See Moghaddam (2008) for a critical overview of psychological theories of intergroup relations.
37 Tajfel & Turner (1979); see also chapter 5 in Moghaddam (2008).
38 Turner et al. (1987).
39 Regarding between-group differentiation and within-group minimization of differences, see Turner et al. (1987, pp. 101–102). For a discussion of the cognitive turn in social identity research, see Turner (1982).
40 Turner et al. (1987, pp. 54–55).
41 See chapter 9 in Turner et al. (1987) and Moghaddam (2002).
42 See Pruitt-Young (2021).
43 See Blok's (1998) excellent discussion of Freud's insights on 'the narcissism of minor differences.'
44 Tajfel et al. (1971).
45 See Moghaddam & Stringer (1986).
46 Brainyquotes.com/quotes/bill_shankly_312046
47 For example, see Rothbart & Bartlett (2008).
48 See Varshney (2007, pp. 289–291).
49 Easterly (2001, p. 687).
50 See readings in Alcock et al. (2001), particularly chapter 12.
51 Feldstein (2019).
52 Beraja et al. (2021).
53 See Piketty (2014), Atkinson (2015), and Zucman (2019).
54 Haller (2015).
55 For example, see Dincer & Hotard (2011), Fum & Hodler (2010), and Ravallion (2020).
56 For an example of research on continued discrimination against ethnic minorities, see Veit & Thijsen (2021).
57 Haller (2015, p. 230).
58 Leighley (2021).
59 Colby & Ortman (2015).
60 See the discussion on minority population size and threat in Craig, Rucker, & Richeson (2018).
61 See Estevens (2018) on the security and defense issues seen to be related to the influx of ethnic minorities to Europe.
62 Moghaddam (2006).
63 Ryan (1981).

64 Mann (2006).
65 Caldwell (1985).
66 The isolation of Japan was complex; see Kazui's (1982) discussion of foreign relations during the isolation period.
67 Moghaddam (2019).
68 Snel, Bilgili, & Staring (2021).
69 Jenne (2011, p. 112).
70 For example, see Bell-Fialkoff (1996) and Bulutgil (2016).
71 For indigenous Indians of America, see Anderson (2014); for ethnic minorities in Europe, see Mojzes (2015).
72 See Ther (2014) for modern nation-states and Mann (2004) for democracies.
73 Raza (2019).
74 Pistol (2017).
75 Kamusella (2019).
76 Zahed (2021).
77 Cederman (2019).
78 As Sosnowski (2020) points out, even so-called 'peace agreements' are used by the Assad regime to further subjugate the Syrian population.
79 Stein (2017).
80 Kiernan (2007).
81 Levine (2005).
82 Kite & Whitley (2016).
83 Such publicly stated ethnic biases do not always have the desired effect, as in the case of the public opinion shift against Trump's Muslim ban (Collingwood, Lajevardi, & Oskooii, 2018).

6 Religion, Eternally Present but with a Thousand Faces

1 Zinnbauer & Parganebt (2014). Whitehouse (2004) defines religion in a similarly broad way, as "any set of shared beliefs and actions appealing to supernatural agency" (p. 2).
2 Norris & Inglehart (2004).
3 Hill & Pargament (2003).
4 Hill (2009).
5 Evans & Evans (2008).
6 Pietschnig & Voracek (2015).
7 Zuckerman, Silberman, & Hall (2013).
8 For example, see the book series 'Routledge Studies in Religion and Politics' edited by Jeffrey Haynes.
9 Inglehart (2020).
10 Brauer (2018).
11 Fox (2006).
12 Moghaddam (2019).
13 Wilcox & Robinson (2019).

14 Iversen (2004).
15 Dreher (2020).
16 See chapters 10 and 11 in Hood, Hill, & Spilka (2018).
17 Hamer (2004).
18 Smith (1776/1976).
19 Rappaport & Corbally (2020).
20 Atran & Henrich (2010); Bulbulia et al. (2013); Sosis (2009).
21 Levin (2010); Yonker, Schnabelrauch, & DeHaan (2012).
22 Garssen, Visser, & Pool (2021).
23 Levin (2013).
24 Pargament & Raiya (2007); see readings in Vail & Routledge (2020).
25 Rounding et al. (2012).
26 There is also some effort to try to combine the 'adaptive' and 'byproduct' camps; see Powell & Clarke (2012).
27 Barrett (2004).
28 Guthrie (1993).
29 Barrett & Lanman (2008, p. 116).
30 Legare et al. (2012).
31 Collins (2007).
32 Stepaniants & Johnson (2005).
33 Graham & Haidt (2010).
34 Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg (2003).
35 Pyszczynski, Solomon, & Greenberg (2003, p. 149).
36 Goldstein (2006); Turner (1991).
37 Berkessel et al. (2021).
38 Marmot (2015).
39 Pareto (1935).
40 Pareto (1935, III, p. 1430).
41 Moghaddam (2008, p. 70).
42 Brenneman & Miller (2016, p. 90).
43 Chaucer (2006).
44 See Scott's (2011) discussion of the vast social movements of which the great Gothic cathedrals were a part.
45 Köllner (2018).
46 Kroesen (2008).
47 Beekers & Arab (2016).
48 There is continued debate about the processes through which Christianity, in particular, influences and is influenced by indigenous cultures (Vilaça, 2015).
49 Roszko (2012, p. 26).
50 Brooks & Manza (2004); De La & Rodden (2008); Wald & Calhoun-Brown (2018).
51 Research is showing that abortion is not just a national religious issue but is also influenced by local religious context (Adamczyk & Valdimarsdóttir, 2018).

7 The Built Environment and Behavioral Continuity

1 Macleod et al. (2014).
2 This is the Tower of London test (Shallice, 1982).
3 For a broad discussion of how the built environment influences human behavior, see Goldhagen (2017).
4 For example, see Kopec (2018).
5 Watson (1913).
6 Skinner (1971).
7 See Danzinger's (1990) constructionist presentation of the history of psychology.
8 Maslow (2014).
9 Gestalt psychologists demonstrated that when there are greater degrees of freedom in a context and the range of possible behaviors is extended, then even animals can show initiative and creativity. But human experience is structured by prewiring (Kohler, 1975).
10 Moghaddam (2005, ch. 4).
11 Goldstein (2022) provides a comprehensive overview of cognitive psychology.
12 Buss (2022).
13 Milligan (2007, p. 106).
14 Sowinska-Heim (2020, p. 1).
15 Moghaddam (2002).
16 Khalaf (2020).
17 Wyly (1999).
18 Wyly (1999, p. 335).
19 Kipnis (2016).
20 Ladino (2019).
21 Boyer (1996).
22 Yarrow (2018).
23 Willes (2022) provides an excellent discussion of the history of St. Paul's Cathedral.
24 Vestbro & Horelli (2012, p. 317).
25 Goudie (2019).
26 Laufkötter, Zscheischler, & Frölicher (2020).
27 Caminade, McIntyre, & Jones (2019).
28 Nielsen et al. (2021).
29 Scott (2000).
30 Aumann (2019).
31 Scott (2000, p. 128).
32 Moghaddam (2022).
33 Bennett & Hacker (2022, see particularly chapter 3, The mereological fallacy in neuroscience, and chapter 16, Reductionism).
34 Simon (1997).
35 Shapiro (2014).
36 Tolman (1948).
37 This research is well represented by Kahneman (2011).

38 Todorov & Oh (2021).
39 Kahneman (2011).
40 Bolsen, Druckman, & Cook (2013).
41 For the impact of global warming on biodiversity, see Walsh et al. (2019). The literature on the impact of global warming on human health has become enormous; examples are Landrigan et al. (2020) and Munawer (2018).
42 Min (2021).
43 Feygina, Jost, & Goldsmith (2010).
44 Min (2021); Van der Linden et al. (2021).
45 Horton & Keith (2016).
46 Miles-Novelo & Anderson (2019).
47 Chen (2011).

8 Revolutions and Political Plasticity

1 Moghaddam & Hendricks (2020).
2 See readings in Wagoner, Moghaddam, & Valsiner (2018) for reviews and discussions of psychological research on revolutions.
3 Plato (1987).
4 More (2005/1516).
5 There are ambiguities (stemming from the work of Marx himself) as to the meaning of class and the classless society. For an example of modern interpretations, see Nielsen (1978).
6 For example, see readings in Goldstone (2003).
7 Roberts (2015) provides an exceptionally good biography of Napoleon.
8 Van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears (2008).
9 Reicher & Drury (2011).
10 Simon & Klandermans (2001).
11 Louis et al. (2020).
12 Experimental research has shown that, in the Western context at least, people prefer individual rather than group action to rectify injustices (Wright, Taylor, & Moghaddam, 1990).
13 Moghaddam (2008); Walker & Smith (2002).
14 See Afshari (2011) for a discussion of cultural relativism and why Iran should be judged according to international human rights standards.
15 See www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2020/index/irn
16 See https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores
17 Quoted in Figes (2002, p. 447).
18 Harré & Moghaddam (2012).
19 Todes (1995).
20 Watson (1913).
21 Kozulin (1984).
22 Trotsky (1906/2010, p. 109).
23 Taylor (1911).
24 See Moghaddam (1997, pp. 62–64, 72–74).

25 Figes (2002, p. 463).
26 Figes (2002, pp. 463–464).
27 Knight, Li, & Wan (1917).
28 Mirzaei et al. (2021).
29 For examples, see Livi-Bacci (1993) and Viola (1987). For a comparison of collectivization across countries in the Soviet Block, see Lordachi & Bauerkämper (2014).
30 Earley (1989).
31 Garbers & Konradt (2014).
32 Van Dick, Tissington, & Hertel (2009).
33 Makarenko (2004).
34 Tudge (1991, pp. 125–126).
35 Goldhagen (2017).
36 Stites (1988).
37 Figes (2002, pp. 445–457).
38 Figes & Kolonitski (1999).
39 Moghaddam (2002).
40 Kertzer (1988, p. 14).
41 Oushakine (2013).
42 Figes (2007).
43 Matthews (1978).
44 There have been shifts and continue to be differences in the interpretation of the Soviet experience (Kassymbekova & Chokobaeva, 2021).
45 See Gauriot & Page (2015) for an examination of behavior in relation to individual and collective incentives.
46 See the meta-analysis of this literature by Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford (2014).
47 Nyberg et al. (2018).

9 War as Transformative

1 Razavi (2009).
2 Blanchette (2019) argues that Mao's radical influence has continued and China still has a Red Guard.
3 Afshon (2016).
4 See the introduction in Smith (1986).
5 Scheidel (2017).
6 Sassoon (2017/1928).
7 The most important poets in this group are discussed by Johnston (1964).
8 See particularly Titmus (1950) and Arthur Marwick (e.g., 1974, 1988), who wrote extensively on this subject.
9 Sherif (1966).
10 Milgram (1974).
11 See Moghaddam (2005, ch.15).
12 Asch (1956).
13 See Moghaddam (2005, ch.16).

14 Milgram (1974).
15 Moghaddam (1998, ch.7).
16 Dabashi & Nikzadfar (2017) refer to it as a Green Movement.
17 Steele & Schubiger (2018).
18 Quinn (1976).
19 Huang (2016).
20 Justino & Stojetz (2019).
21 Mayhew (2005).
22 Lubkemann (2008).
23 Mattocks et al. (2012).
24 Koolaee (2014, p. 281).
25 Koolaee (2014, p. 283).
26 Dumenil (2020).
27 Wood (2008).
28 Moghaddam (2008).
29 Moghaddam (2018a, p. ix).
30 Dieter & Engel (2019, p. 14).
31 Priebe et al. (2013, p. 53).
32 For example, see Robben (2021) on the destruction of Rotterdam during World War II.
33 Wessells (2016).
34 Hasanovic (2011).
35 Stark et al. (2016).
36 Priebe et al. (2013).
37 Lovric & Pecanac (2020).
38 Forrest, Edwards, & Daraganova (2018).
39 Freud (1930/1961, p. 114).
40 See chapter 4 in Moghaddam (2008).
41 Janis (1972).
42 Moghaddam (2018a).
43 Scheidel (2017, pp. 6–7).
44 For distribution of wealth, see Camyar & Ulupinar (2015); for economic recovery, see Vonyo (2018).
45 Mueller (2020).
46 For example, see Cosgel & Ergene (2012) and Scheve & Stasavage (2012).
47 Cosgel & Ergene (2012).
48 For the United States, see Bank, Stark, & Thorndike (2008); for the United Kingdom, see Daunton (2002).
49 Caverley (2014, p. 2).
50 Scheidel (2017, p. 115).
51 See chapter 5 in Scheidel (2017) and also Feinstein (1996).
52 Scheidel (2017, p. 208).
53 Piketty (2014); Atkinson (2015).
54 Piketty (2014, p. 397).
55 Western & Rosenfeld (2012).

56 For example, see Collins (2001) on the issue of African American advancement during the 1940s in the United States.
57 For a 'neutral' description of the gig economy, see Duggan et al. (2021).

10 Technology Forces Change

1 Pettegree & Hall (2004).
2 Burnett (2000).
3 Rubin (2014).
4 Marx & Engels (1848/2021).
5 Murray (2000, p, 40).
6 Boyes & Steele (2020).
7 DiMaggio et al. (2001).
8 Abbate (1999).
9 Levine (2002).
10 Dougherty (2005).
11 Pew Research Center (2021).
12 Newman et al. (2019).
13 Miao (2019).
14 Sairambay (2022).
15 Hölig, Hasebrink, & Behre (2021).
16 Gómez et al. (2013).
17 Dhanvijay & Patil (2019).
18 Cesario (2018).
19 Bussey & Sillence (2019).
20 Hardey (1999).
21 For example, for the benefits of internet-based education prior to colonoscopy, see Trasolini et al. (2020).
22 Dalenogare et al. (2018).
23 Nisar, Prabhaker, & Strakova (2019).
24 Sparrow & Sparrow (2006).
25 Sahut, Landoli, & Teulon (2019).
26 Jha & Kodila-Tedika (2020).
27 Bode (2012).
28 Smidi & Shahin (2017). Faris & Etling (2008) provide a very useful list of uprisings helped by electronic communications.
29 Shirky (2011).
30 For a fuller discussion of this issue, see Zhuravskaya, Petrova, & Enikolopov (2020).
31 Bode (2017).
32 Bode et al. (2014).
33 Faris & Etling (2008, p. 69).
34 Varol et al. (2014).
35 Freeberg (1999).

36 Poushter, Bishop, & Chwe (2018).
37 Auxier & Anderson (2021).
38 Shirky (2011, p. 40).
39 Linvill et al. (2019).
40 Nimmo (2020).
41 Andrew & Mitrokhin (1999) provide numerous examples.
42 See the US ambassador's memoir (Yovanovitch, 2022).
43 Diamond (2010).
44 Polyakova & Meserole (2019).
45 Gunitsky (2015).
46 Roberts (2020).
47 Acemoglu & Robinson (2006).
48 Moghaddam (2013, p. 28).
49 Gunitsky (2015).
50 Keremoglu & Weidmann (2020, p. 1695).
51 MacKinnon (2011).
52 Linvill et al. (2019).
53 Kendall-Taylor, Frantz, & Wright (2020).
54 Moghaddam (2007).
55 Deibert & Rohozinski (2010).
56 Beam, Hmielowski, & Hutchens (2018).
57 Anspach & Carlson (2020).
58 Cinelli et al. (2021). Also, see Dubois & Blank (2018) for a discussion of how the echo chamber is overstated.
59 Moghaddam (2016).

11 Globalization and Deglobalization

1 Reese, Rosenmann, & Cameron (2019).
2 Greider (1997).
3 Moghaddam (2019).
4 Ohmae (1990, 1995).
5 Wright (1990).
6 One such supporter is Wolf (2004).
7 Gómez (2008).
8 Friedman (2000, p. 9).
9 Dewey (2007).
10 Editorial (2006).
11 Altbach (2012).
12 Ching et al. (2011).
13 Erixon (2018).
14 Erixon (2018, p. 7).
15 Johnson (2002).
16 Lloyd (2005).

17 See the special issue edited by McKenzie (2019).
18 Kallens, Dale, & Smaldino (2018).
19 Kay & Regier (2003).
20 Jameson (2005).
21 Rosch & Levitin (2002).
22 For ethnic groups, see Ellis et al. (2017); for gender groups, see Quinn et al. (2008).
23 Quinn et al. (2016).
24 Kelly et al. (2005).
25 Jin & Baillargeon (2017).
26 Chalik & Rhodes (2015), Chalik & Dunham (2020).
27 See Rosch & Levitin (2002) for a discussion of categorization and its benefits to human cognition and action.
28 Hammond & Axelrod (2006).
29 See chapter 9 in Moghaddam (1998).
30 Batson (1995) is the leading voice arguing that humans are altruistic.
31 Daly & Wilson (1988).
32 Hammond & Axelrod (2006).
33 Van den Berghe (1987).
34 Kite & Whitley (2016).
35 For superordinate, see Huo et al. (1996); for common group, see Nier et al. (2001).
36 Johnson (2002).
37 Sugden (1991).
38 Moghaddam (2015).
39 Dost-Gozkan & Sonmez Keith (2015).
40 Hardin (1998).
41 Kyburz-Graber (2021).
42 Dunbar (1993, p. 687).
43 For an example of a test of Dunbar's number, see Carron, Kaski, & Dunbar (2016).
44 Hornsey & Jetten (2004, p. 251) discuss this research.
45 Of course, some of them identify with the City of Liverpool by supporting Everton.
46 Moghaddam (2018b).
47 Moghaddam (2008, p. 13).
48 Moghaddam (2019).

12 The Eternal Dictator and Political Plasticity

1 Economy (2018, p. 10).
2 Among the numerous accounts of the transition period between the Trump and Biden presidencies, Woodward and Costa (2021) provide the most compelling.

3 Although research psychologists have given little attention to this topic, some relevant books are: *The Mind of the African Strongman* (H. J. Cohen, 2015), *Tyrannical Minds: Psychological Profiling, Narcissism, and Dictatorship* (D. Haycock, 2021), and *Delusions of a Dictator: The Mind of Marcos as Revealed in His Secret Diaries* (W. C. Rempel, 1993). There are also numerous published biographies of individual dictators, such as Montefiore's (2003) book on Stalin.
4 I wrote *The Psychology of Dictatorship* (Moghaddam, 2013) as a small step toward filling this gap.
5 Moghaddam (2016, 2019).
6 Moghaddam (2016).
7 Historical assessments of the minds of dictators are often hindered by lack of detailed accounts of their behavioral and cognitive styles.
8 My working assumption is that prior to the development of stable agriculture, the domestication of animals, and large settlements from about 10,000 years ago, a reliable surplus was not produced. For a more in-depth and nuanced discussion on the surplus, see Baran (1953).
9 For an assessment of contemporary psychological theories that address legitimizing ideologies, see Vargas-Salfate et al. (2018).
10 See discussions in Vaughn, Eerkens, & Kantner (2009).
11 Moghaddam (2013).
12 Fukuyama's (2006) best-selling – but incorrect – book on the so-called 'end of history' became a symbol of the supposed universal and eternal triumph of capitalist democracies.
13 Freedom House (2021).
14 Meng (2020) provides some excellent illustrative case studies of the constructive role of institutionalized constraints on leadership.
15 Pincus & Lukowitsky (2010).
16 Montefiore (2003, p. 577).
17 Prasad (2022).
18 The psychological characteristics of those high on Machiavellianism was researched first by Richard Christie and Florence Geis (1970), using a psychological measure inspired by Niccolò Machiavelli's (1469–1527) writings.
19 Bullock's (1993) majestic work depicts Hitler and Stalin as similar in blaming others for failures.
20 Rabinbach (2008) rejects the view that the Nazis started the fire.
21 Dunlop (2014).
22 Pfiffner (2021).

Afterword

1 For an in-depth discussion of these identity needs, see Moghaddam (2019).
2 These characteristics are discussed in Moghaddam (2016).
3 Rosin (2013).

4 For example, see Garcia (2008).
5 Becker, Hubbard, & Murphy (2010, p. 203).
6 Schiebinger (1987, pp. 324–325).
7 Shields (1975).
8 Jaumotte (2003).
9 Becker, Hubbard, & Murphy (2010).
10 Becker, Hubbard, & Murphy (2010, pp. 203–204).
11 For example, see UNESCO (2016).
12 Becker, Hubbard, & Murphy (2010, pp. 203–204).
13 Reynolds & Burge (2008).
14 Lauglo & Liu (2019).
15 Ullah & Ullah (2019).
16 Mitch & Cappelli (2019).
17 Sommers (2015) and Farrell & Gray (2019) respectively.
18 Mitch (2019).
19 *The Economist* (2022).
20 Table 1.1 in World Economic Forum (2021).
21 Klasen (2018) provides a useful review of this research area.
22 Stoet & Geary (2018).
23 Bertrand (2018).
24 Ehrlich (1970).
25 Hwang & Ha Lee (2014).
26 Moghaddam (2012).

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